

**The Ramakrishna Mission
Institute of Culture Library**

Presented by

Dr. Baridbaran Mukerji

RMICOL—8

11917

**THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION INSTITUTE OF CULTURE
LIBRARY**

CALCUTTA - 29

OPENS. 10 AM. - 8-30 P.M.

TEL.

FINES : One anna per day after the last date below.

**RENEWALS : By post, telephone or in person. Quote the
number opposite and last date below.**

9 AUG 2006

P.T.O.

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

EDITED WITH MEMOIR NOTES AND
EXERCISES BY

SUSAN CUNNINGTON

AUTHOR OF

"STORIES FROM DANTE" "GEORGIAN ENGLAND" ETC.



LONDON

GEORGE G. HARRAP & COMPANY LTD.

2 & 3 PORTSMOUTH STREET KINGSWAY W.C.

AND AT SYDNEY

First published July 1921

R.M.C. LIBRARY	
Acc. No.	11917
Ch.	
De.	
Sl. Card	✓
Class	✓
Cat	✓
Bk. Card	✓
Checked	an

Printed by Jarrold & Sons, Limited, Norwich, England

PREFACE

THIS little book is intended as a contribution to the scholar's library, in which he may make acquaintance with the works of a great writer in the form of extracts, and thus have opened to him a wide field of interest where later he can range at will. The notes are purposely placed at the end so that the text shall not be interrupted by explanations, which often dissipate attention rather than stimulate understanding. At the same time, necessary ones are supplied to which the student can refer if he desires.

The questions and exercises are designed to suggest the variety of interest provided by an author with a full mind, and also to indicate the absence of water-tight compartments in knowledge. They should not be rigorously set as formal tasks and laboriously corrected by the instructor. Contributions in writing might be invited, and meritorious ones read aloud and discussed in class; afterward such might be preserved in the archives of the school. Often one or more might be orally dealt with, and thus the inarticulate self-confidence of our pupils be at once corrected and developed, and our curious incapacity for clear, simple statements in connected sentences amended.

Few only of the many learners in our places of education have any strong taste for the architecture of language, but fewer still are not moved by its content and spirit. Yet we have consistently hammered at grammar and philology to absolutely indifferent minds, and have ignored the flaming brightness of the thought it clothed. And, according to the grade of school, we have, until lately, supplied for reading by immature children century-old classics entirely unsuited to their stage of development, both in matter and manner; or bald, thin, ineffective streams of narrative or description

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

which could do nothing either to inspire their minds or enlarge their vocabulary. In either case the result is that the school-trained girl or boy has no taste for good literature, or appreciation of fine expression ; but, either from mental fatigue or lack of development, prefers the sorry trash of popular novels and magazines to the most exhilarating adventure or romance of our masters of fiction.

The fire and energy of Ruskin's thought and style, even his extravagances and perversities, cannot fail to awaken response in young minds too often starved of all that is picturesque and dramatic ; while his largeness of outlook and generosity of soul make an appeal to them which is not lost because the precise bearings of every argument or denunciation are not clear to them.

The verse extracts at the end of each section are inserted in accordance with Ruskin's own method of enriching his presentment of ideas, and in most cases they are a restatement or emphasizing of some thought in the preceding prose.

S. CUNNINGTON

STOVRINGTON

May 1921

CONTENTS

	PAGE
MEMOIR	9
<i>From "Modern Painters"</i>	
THE OPEN SKY	15
CLOUDS	18
MOUNTAINS	25
WATER	29
TREES	35
BEAUTY IN NATURE	39
<i>From "Ethics of the Dust"</i>	
CRYSTAL SORROWS	47
<i>From "Queen of the Air"</i>	
ATHENA IN THE HEAVENS	56
ATHENA IN THE HEART	66
<i>From "Unto This Last"</i>	
THE ROOTS OF HONOUR	82
THE VEINS OF WEALTH	90
<i>From "The Cestus of Aglaia"</i>	
LIBERTY •	97
<i>From "The Seven Lamps of Architecture"</i>	
THE LAMP OF SACRIFICE	102
THE LAMP OF TRUTH	108
THE LAMP OF POWER	118
THE LAMP OF BEAUTY	122
THE LAMP OF LIFE	129

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

From "The Seven Lamps of Architecture"—
continued

PAGE

THE LAMP OF MEMORY

133

THE LAMP OF OBEDIENCE

140

NOTES

147

LIST OF RUSKIN'S PRINCIPAL WORKS

156

MEMOIR

JOHN RUSKIN was born in London in the year 1819, and died on January 20, 1900, in the great influenza epidemic. He was an only child, and the constant companion of his father and mother until their death, his father dying in 1864 and his mother at a great age in 1871. The early years of the nineteenth century were within the period when children were expected to be 'seen but not heard,' and little John Ruskin was brought up as strictly as any. But though his parents never indulged him they made him the centre of their lives. In his unfinished reminiscences, *Præterita*, he tells us much of his infancy and boyhood: the quiet house, the absence of toys and treats, the strict discipline, and the early practice of self-control and self-denial.

In his nursery days little John devised an amusement of which he never tired, and to which he believed in later years he owed much of his power of concentrated observation and his sense of colour and form. This was the study of the deep tints and shadows in the carpet as he lay at full length on the floor; seeing, no doubt, as little folks see in the fire, many things missed by his elders.

Mr and Mrs Ruskin were great book-lovers, and thus the delightful companionship of books was not shut away from the boy. As a tiny fellow his mother read to him constantly; every day a chapter from the Bible was read before any other book was attempted. But by the time he was five years old he could read for himself—indeed, he had taught himself almost entirely, and henceforth he read the chapters verse by verse in turn with his mother, missing out no hard words and skipping no lists of names. To this daily Bible-reading Ruskin gratefully attributed his familiar knowledge of the

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

deep truths and beautiful phrasing of the sacred Scriptures, which disciplined and moulded his own thought and style, so that for his English alone his writings are treasured apart from the subjects of which he treated. These were often unpopular and gave offence to the unthinking who were content with things as they knew them, whether art or education or social conditions.

With his many quiet opportunities it is not surprising that the boy read for himself books which nowadays girls and boys are piloted through with every kind of help and incentive. And he read them over and over again—the real way to enjoy a book and to know its characters and events. Pope's *Homer*, Scott's historical novels, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, and *Robinson Crusoe* alike charmed him ; and at the age of eight he was himself trying to write stories, and illustrating them.

Every year he was taken with his parents for long, unhurried post-chaise journeys. Most parts of England, Wales, and Scotland were visited in this way, and in his ninth year began similar travels abroad, through Italy and France and Switzerland. By a kind of natural instinct the boy studied the movements of clouds and waves and torrents, the shapes of mountains and valleys, and the light and colour of the world through the long summer days.

When he was ten years old he gave his father a birthday present of a composition of his own, *The Battle of Waterloo : a Play in Two Acts* ; and he was perpetually trying to express in verse the ideas suggested by the beautiful scenes through which he journeyed. He had no companions of his own age, for his parents lived very quietly, and he himself was a delicate child. When he was fourteen he was sent to a day-school for two years, his home then being at Denmark Hill ; and afterward he attended lectures at King's College.

He went to Christ Church, Oxford, when he was seventeen ; ill-prepared, it is true, in the severer studies, but keen and enthusiastic in everything he took up. He won the Newdigate Prize for English verse in his third year, and had to declaim his poem according to prize-winning custom in the

MEMOIR

Sheldonian Theatre. He had chosen an Indian subject, *Salsette and Elephanta*, a theme more remote in 1839 than it is to-day, for until after the Indian Mutiny of 1857 English people hardly knew the names of Brahma and Vishnu, and the ancient myths and mysteries of Hinduism. He took his degree in 1842, and had already determined his way of life.

As a boy of thirteen he had made a drawing of Dulwich Bridge with which his father was so pleased that he gave him an illustrated book on Italy. There for the first time the future artist and critic saw some drawings by Turner ; and they were at once an inspiration and a beginning of his life-work. He set himself to study and to imitate them ; and during his student-years his father's gifts to him were several of Turner's pictures, among them the beautiful *Richmond* and *Winchelsea*. On leaving the university he at once began the work that was to challenge an unworthy age to justify or amend its want of artistic appreciation. The first volume of *Modern Painters*, which appeared in 1843, is entirely occupied in this task ; in the second the writer goes deeply into the theory of Beauty, and sets out to explain the quality of beauty in all happy conditions of living organisms. The fifth and final volume of this great work was completed only in 1860 ; but other books came in between, among them *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* and *The Stones of Venice*. Never after the issue of his first book did Ruskin permit a plain 'label' title to name his works ; it was a graceful foible of his to select some words or phrase which should be suggestive and, to himself, full of meaning. (It would be an interesting exercise to attempt to determine the character or subject of the work from its title ; a list of the principal lectures, essays, and books appears at the end of this volume.)

After Oxford Ruskin travelled abroad over the scenes familiar to him, but bent now on thorough study of aspects and phenomena of nature. Hence his illuminating descriptions of the formation and action of clouds and water-torrents and glaciers, the build of mountains and the lie of valleys,

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

the growth of trees and vegetation, and the response of the human eye to light and colour. And his love and admiration and wonder and delight find expression in glowing descriptions, alive with fire, and impetuous and vehement as those of the Hebrew prophets. For this alone his books are worth reading, and have awakened in many intelligent but cramped and narrow minds a resolve akin to his own : to find and know the fuller life, and to reject the sordid pettiness of material riches and self-indulgence.

In later years Ruskin's attention was devoted more to social themes than to those strictly artistic. His *Unto This Last*, which appeared as four papers in the *Cornhill Magazine* in 1860, when Thackeray was editor, so much disturbed and offended the sluggish, contented minds of the reading classes of the day that the editor refused to print any more. Certainly his suggestions and remedies were new and sounded extravagant then, but now, some eighty years later, we find that many of his 'dangerous' ideas have become accepted truths, and some of his projects for social welfare and happiness ~~were~~ being slowly and laboriously adopted.

His love for children and young people led him to give lectures and addresses all over the country in colleges and institutes, schools and museums, and to keep up a vigorous correspondence with working-men friends in the North. Though Slade Professor of Fine Art at Oxford, he was never too much engrossed to sympathize with and to help any enterprise which could spread the love of knowledge or increase the opportunities for happiness among people whose lot seemed grey and sordid. Thus he was an ardent supporter of the Working Men's College, founded in 1854 by Charles Kingsley, Frederick Denison Maurice, and Thomas Hughes, author of *Tom Brown's Schooldays*. Out of this modest effort of so long ago may be said to have grown the Ruskin College at Oxford ; and the many halls and settlements founded in later years were no less the outcome of that first London effort. Perhaps his pet project was the Guild of St George, a little band of North-Country men

MEMOIR

and women who formed themselves into a society to carry out the principles of life which Ruskin had laid down. A simple manner of life, intelligent and persistent industry, the avoidance of machinery for that which the human hand and simple tools could accomplish, and the collecting and preserving together of meritorious examples of art and handicrafts were the chief aims of the guild. Its present-day memento is the Sheffield Art Museum.

In 1871 Ruskin retired to Coniston, in the Lake District, and there he lived a secluded life, his failing health compelling him to cease nearly all his many activities. In an old-world house on the borders of the lake, with a perpetually changing expanse of sky, a lovely stretch of water, and the soft contours of English hills always before his eyes, he lived for nearly thirty years. He revised his earlier writings and occasionally delivered an address at some small gathering, and busied himself with the compiling of reminiscences of his busy life and its many interests.

In accordance with his views on wealth and value and the rich reward of personal sacrifice, he would never permit his books to be issued in cheap editions. Thus it could be ensured that the paper, type, and workmanship were worthy of the matter within; but most of all it involved some sacrifice or self-denial on the part of the reader who desired to possess such books for his own. Ruskin knew well that things we desire are valued in proportion to the costliness of our efforts made to obtain them, and he held in honour the skilled labour which contributes to the attractiveness of a book.

It is true that Ruskin's writings ultimately brought him in a satisfactory income, but that was all he had to live upon during his latter years. For the considerable inheritance that came to him from his father, the "entirely honourable merchant," had all been spent in the various enterprises he had set on foot for the benefit of less fortunate people. In sober earnest he declared that he would not allow himself to be rich, since material wealth in itself was capable of spreading evil around as well as corrupting the heart of the possessor.

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

Indeed, in the closing years of his life, as he sat thinking, musing, often melancholy, and meditating on the past, he regretted what seemed, after all, only a half-hearted sacrifice, and blamed himself that he had not bravely followed the example of St Francis of Assisi and espoused "my lady Poverty."

He lies buried in the little churchyard at Coniston, a runic cross marking the head of his grave, his family thus following his expressed wishes for a simple resting-place instead of the proffered tomb in Westminster Abbey. There, however, in Poets' Corner may be seen a memorial medallion of him. The little village library at Coniston is the proud possessor of a complete set of his works and other mementoes, with many of the treasured drawings which were the companions of his last quiet years.

Readers who wish to make a fuller acquaintance with this poet-prophet of the nineteenth century will find much pleasant reading in Sir E. T. Cook's *Studies in Ruskin*; Mr Frederic Harrison's *Ruskin* (in the "English Men of Letters" series); Mrs Meynell's *John Ruskin* (in the "Modern English Writers" series); and the complete biography written by Mr Collingwood, his friend and companion of many years.

But, best of all, they can obtain his own works in any public library, and may possess for themselves many which appear in various editions from time to time.

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

FROM "MODERN PAINTERS," VOLS. I, II

[Written between 1842 and 1846. While studying the pictures of the great English painter Turner, and comparing his methods with those of the Italian masters, Ruskin investigates and describes the characteristics of the sky, clouds, rain, the soil, mountains, water, and vegetation. Many artists in all ages have sought to paint these effects of nature without understanding the wonderful laws which underlie their formation and growth; but the appearance alone does not reveal enough to enable a true representation to be given. From those sections in vol. i the extracts on natural phenomena are taken, and those on beauty from the discussion by Ruskin in vol. ii of the conception and recognition of beauty and of its existence in various forms.]

THE OPEN SKY

It is a strange thing how little in general people know about the sky. It is the part of creation in which nature has done more for the sake of pleasing man, more, for the sole and evident purpose of talking to him and teaching him, than in any other of her works, and it is just the part in which we least attend to her. There are not many of her other works in which some more material or essential purpose than the mere pleasing of man is not answered by every part of their organization; but every essential purpose of the sky might, so far as we know, be answered, if once in three days, or thereabouts, a great ugly black rain-cloud were brought up over the blue, and everything well watered, and so all left blue again till next time, with perhaps a film of morning and evening mist for dew. And instead of this, there is not a moment of any day of our lives, when nature is not producing scene after scene, picture after picture, glory after glory, and working still upon such exquisite and constant principles of the most perfect beauty, that it is quite certain it is all

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

done for us, and intended for our perpetual pleasure. And every man, wherever placed, however far from other sources of interest or of beauty, has this doing for him constantly. The noblest scenes of the earth can be seen and known but by few ; it is not intended that man should live always in the midst of them ; he injures them by his presence, he ceases to feel them if he be always with them ; but the sky is for all ; bright as it is, it is not

Too bright or good
For human nature's daily food ; ¹

it is fitted in all its functions for the perpetual comfort and exalting of the heart, for the soothing it and purifying it from its dross and dust. Sometimes gentle, sometimes capricious, sometimes awful, never the same for two moments together ; almost human in its passions, almost spiritual in its tenderness, almost divine in its infinity, its appeal to what is immortal in us, is as distinct, as its ministry of chastisement or of blessing to what is mortal is essential. And yet we never attend to it, we never make it a subject of thought, but as it has to do with our animal sensations. . . . If in our moments of utter idleness and insipidity, we turn to the sky as a last resource, which of its phenomena do we speak of ? One says it has been wet, and another it has been windy, and another, it has been warm. . . .

Let us begin then with the simple open blue of the sky. This is of course the colour of the pure atmospheric air, not the aqueous vapour, but the pure azote² and oxygen, and it is the total colour of the whole mass of that air between us and the void of space. It is modified by the varying quantity of aqueous vapour suspended in it, whose colour, in its most imperfect, and therefore most visible, state of solution,³ is pure white (as in steam), which receives, like any other white, the warm hues of the rays of the sun, and, according to its quantity and imperfect solution, makes the sky paler, and at the same time more or less grey, by mixing warm tones with its blue. This grey aqueous vapour, when very

16

THE OPEN SKY

decided, becomes mist, and when local, cloud. Hence the sky is to be considered as a transparent blue liquid, in which, at various elevations, clouds are suspended, those clouds being themselves only particular visible spaces of a substance with which the whole mass of this liquid is more or less impregnated. Now, we all know this perfectly well, and yet we so far forget it in practice, that we little notice the constant connection kept up by nature between her blue and her clouds, and we are not offended by the constant habit of the old masters, of considering the blue sky as totally distinct in its nature, and far separated from the vapours which float in it. With them, cloud is cloud, and blue is blue, and no kind of connection between them is ever hinted at. The sky is thought of as a clear, high, material dome, the clouds as separate bodies suspended beneath it, and in consequence, however delicate and exquisitely removed in tone their skies may be, you always look *at* them, not *through* them. Now, if there be one characteristic of the sky more valuable or necessary to be rendered than another, it is that which Wordsworth has given in the second book of *The Excursion* :

The chasm of sky above my head
Is Heaven's profoundest azure. • No domain
For fickle, short-lived clouds, to occupy,
Or to pass through ; but rather an *abyss*
In which the everlasting stars abide,
And whose soft gloom, and boundless depth, might
tempt
The curious eye to look for them by day.⁴

And, in his *American Notes*, I remember Dickens notices the same truth, describing himself as lying drowsily on the barge deck, looking not at, but *through* the sky. And if you look intensely at the pure blue of a serene sky, you will see that there is a variety and fullness in its very repose. It is not flat, dead colour, but a deep, quivering, transparent body of penetrable air, in which you trace or imagine short, falling spots of deceiving light, and dim shades, faint, veiled vestiges of dark vapour ; and it is this trembling transparency

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

which our great modern master* has especially aimed at and given.

Aqueous vapour or mist, suspended in the atmosphere, becomes visible exactly as dust does in the air of a room. In the shadows you not only cannot see the dust itself, because unilluminated, but you can see other objects through the dust without obscurity, the air being thus actually rendered more transparent by a deprivation of light. Where a sunbeam enters, every particle of dust becomes visible, and a palpable interruption to the sight, so that a transverse sunbeam is a real obstacle to the vision, you cannot see things clearly through it.

Modern Painters, vol. i, Part II, Sect. III, ch. i

CLOUDS

THE first and most important character of clouds is dependent on the different altitudes at which they are formed. The atmosphere may be conveniently considered as divided into three spaces, each inhabited by clouds of specific character altogether different, though, in reality, there is no distinct limit fixed between them by nature, clouds being formed at *every* altitude, and partaking, according to their altitude, more or less of the characters of the upper or lower regions. The scenery of the sky is thus formed of an infinitely graduated series of systematic forms of cloud, each of which has its own region in which alone it is formed, and each of which has specific characters which can only be properly determined by comparing them as they are found clearly distinguished by intervals of considerable space. I shall therefore consider the sky as divided into three regions—the upper region, or region of the cirrus; the central region, or region of the stratus; the lower region, or the region of the rain-cloud.

The clouds which I wish to consider as included in the upper region, never touch even the highest mountains of Europe, and may therefore be looked upon as never formed

* Turner.

CLOUDS

below an elevation of at least 15,000 feet ; they are the motionless multitudinous lines of delicate vapour with which the blue of the open sky is commonly streaked or speckled after several days of fine weather. . . . Their chief characters are—first, Symmetry : They are nearly always arranged in some definite and evident order, commonly in long ranks reaching sometimes from the zenith to the horizon, each rank composed of an infinite number of transverse bars of about the same length, each bar thickest in the middle, and terminating in a traceless vaporous point at each side ; the ranks are in the direction of the wind, and the bars of course at right-angles to it ; these latter are commonly slightly bent in the middle. Frequently two systems of this kind, indicative of two currents of wind, at different altitudes intersect one another, forming a network. . . . The upper clouds . . . differ from all other clouds, in having a plan and system ; whereas other clouds, though there are certain laws which they cannot break, have yet perfect freedom from anything like a relative and general system of government. The upper clouds are to the lower, what soldiers on parade are to a mixed multitude ; no men walk on their heads or their hands, and so there are certain laws which no clouds violate ; but there is nothing except in the upper clouds resembling symmetrical discipline.

Secondly, Sharpness of Edge : The edges of the bars of the upper clouds which are turned to the wind are often the sharpest which the sky shows ; no outline whatever of any other kind of cloud, however marked and energetic, ever approaches the delicate decision of these edges. The outline of a black thunder-cloud is striking, from the great energy of the colour or shade of the general mass ; but as a line, it is soft and indistinct, compared with the edge of the cirrus, in a clear sky with a brisk breeze. On the other hand, the edge of the bar turned away from the wind is always soft, often imperceptible, melting into the blue interstice between it and its next neighbour. Commonly the sharper one edge is, the softer is the other, and the clouds look flat, and as if

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

they slipped over each other like the scales of a fish. When both edges are soft, as is always the case when the sky is clear and windless, the cloud looks solid, round, and fleecy.

Thirdly, Multitude: The delicacy of these vapours is sometimes carried into such an infinity of division, that no other sensation of number that the earth or heaven can give is so impressive. Number is always most felt when it is symmetrical, and, therefore, no sea-waves nor fresh leaves make their number so evident or so impressive as these vapours. Nor is nature content with an infinity of bars or lines alone—each bar is in its turn severed into a number of small undulatory masses, more or less connected according to the violence of the wind. When this division is merely effected by undulation, the cloud exactly resembles sea-sand ribbed by the tide; but when the division amounts to real separation we have the mottled or mackerel skies. . . .

Fourthly, Purity of Colour: The nearest of these clouds—those over the observer's head, being at least three miles above him, and nearly all entering the ordinary sphere of vision, farther from him still, their dark sides are much greyer and cooler than those of other clouds, owing to their distance. They are composed of the purest aqueous vapour, free from all foulness of earthly gases, and of this in the lightest and most ætherial state in which it can be, to be visible. Farther, they receive the light of the sun in a state of far greater intensity than lower objects, the beams being transmitted to them through atmospheric air far less dense, and wholly unaffected by mist, smoke, or any other impurity. Hence their colours are more pure and vivid, and their white less sullied than those of any other clouds.

Lastly, Variety: Variety is never so conspicuous as when it is united with symmetry. The perpetual change of form in other clouds, is monotonous in its very dissimilarity, nor is difference striking where no connection is implied; but if through a range of barred clouds, crossing half the heaven, all governed by the same forces and falling into one general form, there be yet a marked and evident dissimilarity between

THE CENTRAL CLOUD REGION

each member of the great mass—one more finely drawn, the next more delicately moulded, the next more gracefully bent—each broken into differently modelled and variously numbered groups, the variety is doubly striking, because contrasted with the perfect symmetry of which it forms a part. . . .

Of the colours of these clouds I have spoken before, but though I then alluded to their purity and vividness, I scarcely took proper notice of their variety ; there is indeed in nature variety in all things, and it would be absurd to insist on it in each case, yet the colours of these clouds are so marvellous in their changefulness, that they require particular notice. If you watch for the next sunset, when there are a considerable number of these cirri in the sky, you will see, especially at the zenith, that the sky does not remain of the same colour for two inches together ; one cloud has a dark side of cold blue, and a fringe of milky white ; another, above it, has a dark side of purple and an edge of red ; another, nearer the sun, has an underside of orange and an edge of gold ; these you will find mingled with, and passing into the blue of the sky, which in places you will not be able to distinguish from the cool grey of the darker clouds, and which will be itself full of gradation, now pure and deep, now faint and feeble ; and all this is done, not in large pieces, nor on a large scale, but over and over again in every square yard, so that there is no single part nor portion of the whole sky which has not in itself variety of colour enough for a separate picture, and yet no single part which is like another, or which has not some peculiar source of beauty, and some peculiar arrangement of colour of its own.

Modern Painters, vol. i, Part II, Sect. III, ch. ii

THE CENTRAL CLOUD REGION

WE have next to investigate the character of the Central Cloud Region, which I consider as including all clouds which are the usual characteristic of ordinary serene weather, and which touch and envelop the mountains of Switzerland, but

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

never affect those of our own island ; they may therefore be considered as occupying a space of air ten thousand feet in height, extending from five to fifteen thousand feet above the sea.

These clouds, according to their elevation, appear with great variety of form, often partaking of the streaked or mottled character of the higher region, and as often, when the precursors of storm, manifesting forms closely connected with the lowest rain-clouds ; but the species especially characteristic of the central region is a white, ragged, irregular, and scattered vapour, which has little form and less colour. . . .

Clouds, it is to be remembered, are not so much local vapour, as vapour rendered locally visible by a fall of temperature. Thus a cloud, whose parts are in constant motion, will hover on a snowy mountain, pursuing constantly the same track upon its flanks, and yet remaining of the same size, the same form, and in the same place, for half a day together. No matter how violent or how capricious the wind may be, the instant it approaches the spot where the chilly influence of ~~the~~ snow extends, the moisture it carries becomes visible, and then and there the cloud forms on the instant, apparently maintaining its form against the wind, though the careful and keen eye can see all its parts in the most rapid motion across the mountain. The outlines of such a cloud are of course not determined by the irregular impulses of the wind, but by the fixed lines of radiant heat which regulate the temperature of the atmosphere of the mountain. . . . Another resultant phenomenon is the formation of cloud in the calm air to leeward of a steep summit ; cloud whose edges are in rapid motion, where they are affected by the current of the wind above, and stream from the peak like the smoke of a volcano, yet always vanish at a certain distance from it as steam issuing from a chimney. When wet weather of some duration is approaching, a small white spot of cloud will sometimes appear low on the hill flanks ; it will not move, but will increase gradually for some little time, then diminish, still without moving ; disappear altogether, reappear ten

THE REGION OF THE RAIN-CLOUD

minutes afterward, exactly in the same spot ; increase to a greater extent than before, again disappear, again return, and at last permanently ; other similar spots of cloud forming simultaneously, with various fluctuations, each in its own spot, and at the same level on the hill-side, until all expand, join together, and form an unbroken veil of threatening grey, which darkens gradually into storm. What in such cases takes place palpably and remarkably, is more or less a law of formation in all clouds whatsoever ; they being bounded rather by lines expressive of changes of temperature in the atmosphere, than by the impulses of the currents of wind in which those changes take place.

Modern Painters, vol. i, Part II, Sect. III, ch. iii

THE REGION OF THE RAIN-CLOUD

THE clouds which I wish to consider as characteristic of the lower, or rainy region, differ not so much in their real nature from those of the central and uppermost regions, as in appearance, owing to their greater nearness. For the central clouds, and perhaps even the high cirri, deposit moisture, if not distinctly rain, as is sufficiently proved by the existence of snow on the highest peaks of the Himaleh ; and when, on any such mountains, we are brought into close contact with the central clouds, we find them little differing from the ordinary rain-cloud of the plains, except by being slightly less dense and dark. But the apparent differences, dependent on proximity, are most marked and important. . . .

To the region of the rain-cloud belong also all those phenomena of drifted smoke, heat-haze, local mists in the morning or evening ; in valleys, or over water, mirage, white steaming vapour rising in evaporation from moist and open surfaces, and everything which visibly affects the condition of the atmosphere without actually assuming the form of cloud. These phenomena are as perpetual in all countries as they are beautiful, and afford by far the most effective and valuable means which the painter possesses, for modification

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

of the forms of fixed objects. The upper clouds are distinct and comparatively opaque, they do not modify, but conceal ; but through the rain-cloud, and its accessory phenomena, all that is beautiful may be made manifest, and all that is hurtful concealed ; what is paltry may be made to look vast, and what is ponderous, ærial ; mystery may be obtained without obscurity, and decoration without disguise. And, accordingly, nature herself uses it constantly, as one of her chief means of most perfect effect ; not in one country, nor another, but everywhere—everywhere, at least, where there is anything worth calling landscape. I cannot answer for the desert of the Sahara, but I know that there can be no greater mistake than supposing that delicate and variable effects of mist and rain-cloud are peculiar to northern climates.

Modern Painters, vol. i, Part II, Sect. III, ch. iv

I bring fresh showers for the thirsting flowers,
From the seas and the streams ;
I bear light shade for the leaves when laid
In their noonday dreams.
From my wings are shaken the dews that waken
The sweet buds every one,
When rocked to rest on their mother's breast
As she dances about the sun.
I wield the flail of the lashing hail,
And whiten the green plains under,
And then again I dissolve it in rain,
And laugh as I pass in thunder.

.
I am the daughter of Earth and Water,
And the nursling of the Sky ;
I pass through the pores of the ocean and shores ;
I change, but I cannot die.

SHELLEY, *The Cloud*

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. Make a selection of verse quotations for a calendar for one week having reference to the sky or clouds.
2. Write two short descriptions of cloud effects in April as seen by (a) a shepherd ; (b) an airman.

MOUNTAINS

3. What kind of clouds travel against the wind ?
4. Make a sketch showing different kinds of clouds.
5. Quote what you consider the three most interesting things Ruskin tells us about the sky and its scenery.
6. What beautiful sky effects can you suggest as visible to a townsman ? To what are they partly due ?

MOUNTAINS

MOUNTAINS are, to the rest of the body of the earth, what violent muscular action is to the body of man. The muscles and tendons of its anatomy are, in the mountain, brought out with fierce and convulsive energy, full of expression, passion, and strength ; the plains and the lower hills are the repose and the effortless motion of the frame, when its muscles lie dormant and concealed beneath the lines of its beauty, yet ruling those lines in their every undulation. . . . The spirit of the hills is action ; that of the lowlands, repose ; and between these there is to be found every variety of motion and of rest ; from the inactive plain, sleeping like the firmament, with cities for stars, to the fiery peaks, which, with heaving bosoms and exulting limbs, with the clouds drifting like hair from their bright foreheads, lift up their Titan hands to Heaven, saying, " I live for ever ! "

But there is this difference between the action of the earth, and that of a living creature, that while the exerted limb marks its bones and tendons through the flesh, the excited earth casts off the flesh altogether, and its bones come out from beneath. Mountains are the bones of the earth, their highest peaks are invariably those parts of its anatomy which in the plains lie buried under five and twenty thousand feet of solid thickness of superincumbent soil, and which spring up in the mountain ranges in vast pyramids or wedges, flinging their garment of earth away from them on each side. The masses of the lower hills are laid over and against their sides like the masses of lateral masonry against the skeleton arch of an unfinished bridge, except that they slope up to

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

and lean against the central ridge: and finally, upon the slopes of these lower hills are strewed the level beds of sprinkled gravel, sand, and clay, which form the extent of the champaign. . . . Nor is this a truth only of the earth on a large scale, for every minor rock (in position) comes out from the soil about it as an island out of the sea, lifting the earth near it like waves beating on its sides.

Such being the structure of the framework of the earth, it is next to be remembered that all soil whatsoever, wherever it is accumulated in greater quantity than is sufficient to nourish the moss or the wallflower, has been so, either by the direct transporting agency of water, or under the guiding influence and power of water. All plains capable of cultivation are deposits from some kind of water—some from swift and tremendous currents, leaving their soil in sweeping banks and furrowed ridges—others, and this is in mountain districts almost invariably the case, by slow deposit from a quiet lake in the mountain hollow, which has been gradually filled by the soil carried into it by streams, which soil is of course finally left spread at the exact level of the surface of the former lake, as level as the quiet water itself. Hence we constantly meet with plains in hill districts, which fill the hollows of the hills with as perfect and faultless a level as water, and out of which the steep rocks rise at the edge with as little previous disturbance, or indication of their forms beneath, as they do from the margin of a quiet lake. Every delta—and there is one at the head of every lake in every hill-district¹—supplies an instance of this. . . .

We find, according to this its internal structure, which, I believe, with the assistance of Turner, can scarcely now be misunderstood, that the earth may be considered as divided into three great classes of formation, which geology has already named for us. Primary—the rocks, which, though in position lower than all others, rise to form the central peaks, or interior nuclei of all mountain ranges. Secondary—the rocks which are laid in beds above these, and which form the greater proportion of all hill scenery. Tertiary—the

MOUNTAINS

light beds of sand, gravel, and clay, which are strewed upon the surface of all, forming plains and habitable territory for man.

Modern Painters, vol. i, Part II, Sect. IV, ch. i

In the range of inorganic nature, I doubt if any object can be found more perfectly beautiful than a fresh, deep snow-drift, seen under warm light. Its curves are of inconceivable perfection and changefulness, its surface and transparency alike exquisite, its light and shade of inexhaustible variety and inimitable finish, the shadows sharp, pale, and of heavenly colour, the reflected lights intense and multitudinous, and mingled with the sweet occurrences of transmitted light. No mortal hand can approach the majesty or loveliness of it, yet it is possible by care and skill at least to suggest the preciousness of its forms and intimate nature of its light and shade. . . .

Snow is modified by the under forms of the hill in some sort as dress is by the anatomy of the human frame. And as no dress can be well laid on without conceiving the body beneath, so no Alp can be drawn unless its under form is conceived first, and its snow laid on afterward.

Every high Alp has as much snow upon it as it can hold or carry : ² It is not, observe, a mere coating of snow of given depth throughout, but it is snow loaded on until the rocks can hold no more. The surplus does not fall in the winter, because, fastened by continual frost, the quantity of snow which an Alp can carry is greater than each single winter can bestow ; it falls in the first mild days of spring in enormous avalanches. Afterwards the melting continues, gradually removing from all the steep rocks the small quantity of snow which was all they could hold, and leaving them black and bare among the accumulated fields of unknown depth, which occupy the capacious valleys and less inclined superficies of the mountain.

Hence it follows that the deepest snow does not take nor indicate the actual forms of the rocks on which it lies, but it

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

hangs from peak to peak in unbroken and sweeping festoons, or covers whole groups of peaks, which afford it sufficient hold, with vast and unbroken domes: these festoons and domes being guided in their curves, and modified in size, by the violence and prevalent direction of the winter winds.

Modern Painters, vol. i, Part II, Sect. IV, ch. ii

It cannot be too carefully held in mind, in examining the principles of mountain structure, that nearly all the laws of nature with respect to external form are rather universal tendencies, evidenced by a plurality of instances, than imperative necessities³ complied with by all. For instance, it may be said to be a universal law with respect to the boughs of all trees that they incline their extremities more to the ground in proportion as they are lower on the trunk, and that the higher their point of insertion is, the more they share in the upward tendency of the trunk itself. But yet there is not a single group of boughs in any one tree which does not show exceptions to the rule, and present boughs lower in insertion, and yet steeper in inclination, than their neighbours. Nor is this defect or deformity, but the result of the constant habit of nature to carry variety into her very principles, and make the symmetry and beauty of her laws the more felt by the grace and accidentalism with which they are carried out. No one familiar with foliage could doubt for an instant of the necessity of giving evidence of this downward tendency in the boughs; but it would be nearly as great an offence against truth to make the law hold good with every individual branch, as not to exhibit its influence on the majority. Now, though the laws of mountain form are more rigid and constant than those of vegetation, they are subject to the same species of exception in carrying out. Though every mountain has these great tendencies in its lines, not one in a thousand of those lines is absolutely consistent with and obedient to this universal tendency.

Modern Painters, vol. i, Part II, Sect. IV, ch. iii

WATER

In the calm darkness of the moonless nights,
In the lone glare of day, the snows descend
Upon that Mountain ; none beholds them there,
Nor when the flakes burn in the sinking sun,
Or the star-beams dart through them :—Winds contend
Silently there, and heap the snow with breath
Rapid and strong, but silently ! Its home
The voiceless lightning in these solitudes
Keeps innocently, and like vapour broods
Over the snow. The secret Strength of things
Which governs thought, and to the infinite dome
Of Heaven is as a law, inhabits thee !

SHELLEY, *Mont Blanc*

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. What books have you read which give exciting descriptions of mountain-climbing ?
2. What is the difference between a hill and a mountain ?
3. Name some of the highest mountains in the world, and find out if any of them have been climbed, and if so by whom.
4. Quote some of the strangest truths Ruskin tells us about mountains.
5. Find some poems and verses written upon mountains and mountain scenery.
6. Draw a diagram representing the three great classes of formation.

WATER

Of all inorganic substances, acting in their own proper nature, and without assistance or combination, water is the most wonderful. If we think of it¹ as the source of all the change-fulness and beauty which we have seen in clouds ; then as the instrument by which the earth we have contemplated was modelled into symmetry, and its crags chiselled into grace ; then as, in the form of snow, it robes the mountains it has made, with that transcendent light which we could not have conceived if we had not seen ; then as it exists in the foam of the torrent—in the iris which spans it, in the morning mist which rises from it, in the deep crystalline pools which mirror its hanging shore, in the broad lake and

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

glancing river ; finally, in that which is to all human minds the best emblem of unwearied, unconquerable power, the wild, various, fantastic, tameless unity of the sea ; what shall we compare to this mighty, this universal element, for glory and for beauty ? or how shall we follow its eternal changefulness of feeling ? ² It is like trying to paint a soul. . . . There is hardly a roadside pond or pool which has not as much landscape *in* it as above it. It is not the brown, muddy, dull thing we suppose it to be ; it has a heart like ourselves, and in the bottom of that there are the boughs of the tall trees, and the blades of the shaking grass, and all manner of hues, of variable, pleasant light out of the sky ; nay, the ugly gutter, that stagnates over the drain bars, in the heart of the foul city, is not altogether base ; down in that, if you will look deep enough, you may see the dark, serious blue of far-off sky, and the passing of pure clouds. It is at your own will that you see³ in that despised stream, either the refuse of the street, or the image of the sky. . . .

† *Modern Painters*, vol. i, Part II, Sect. V, chap. i

11, 917

Go to the edge of a pond, in a perfectly calm day, at some place where there is duck-weed floating on the surface—not thick, but a leaf here and there. Now, you may either see in the water the reflection of the sky, or you may see the duck-weed ; but you cannot, by any effort, see both together. If you look for the reflection, you will be sensible of a sudden change or effort in the eye, by which it adapts itself to the reception of the rays which have come all the way from the clouds, have struck on the water, and so been sent up again to the eye. The focus you adopt is one fit for great distance ; and, accordingly, you will feel that you are looking down a great way under the water, while the leaves of the duck-weed, though they lie upon the water at the very spot on which you are gazing so intently, are felt only as a vague, uncertain interruption, causing a little confusion in the image below, but entirely indistinguishable as leaves,—and even their colour unknown and unperceived. Unless

WATER

you think of them, you will not even feel that anything interrupts your sight, so excessively slight is their effect. If, on the other hand, you make up your mind to look for the leaves of the duck-weed, you will perceive an instantaneous change in the effort of the eye, by which it becomes adapted to receive near rays—those which have only come from the surface of the pond. You will then see the delicate leaves of the duck-weed with perfect clearness, and in vivid green ; but while you do so, you will be able to perceive nothing of the reflections in the very water on which they float—nothing but a vague flashing and melting of light and dark hues, without form or meaning, which, to investigate, or find out what they mean or are, you must quit your hold of the duck-weed, and plunge down.

Hence it appears, that whenever we see plain reflections of comparatively distant objects in near water, we cannot possibly see the surface, and *vice versa* ; so that when in a painting we give the reflections with the same clearness with which they are visible in nature, we presuppose the effort of the eye to look under the surface, and, of course, destroy the surface, and induce an effect of clearness which, perhaps, the artist has not particularly wished to attain, but which he has found himself forced into, by his reflections, in spite of himself. And the reason of this effect of clearness appearing preternatural is, that people are not in the habit of looking at water with the distant focus adapted to the reflections, unless by particular effort. We invariably, under ordinary circumstances, use the surface focus ; and, in consequence, receive nothing more than a vague and confused impression of the reflected colours and lines, however clearly, calmly, and vigorously all may be defined underneath, if we choose to look for them. We do not look for them, but glide along over the surface, catching only playing light and capricious colour for evidence of reflection, except where we come to images of objects close to the surface, which the surface focus is of course adapted to receive ; and these we see clearly, as of the weeds on the shore, or of sticks rising out of the water, etc. . . .

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

When water, not in very great body, runs in a rocky bed much interrupted by hollows, so that it can rest every now and then in a pool as it goes along, it does not acquire a continuous velocity of motion. It pauses after every leap, and curdles about, and rests a little, and then goes on again ; and if in this comparatively tranquil and rational state of mind it meets with any obstacle, as a rock or stone, it parts on each side of it with a little bubbling foam, and goes round ; if it comes to a step in its bed, it leaps it lightly, and then after a little plashing at the bottom, stops again to take breath. But if its bed be on a continuous slope, not much interrupted by hollows, so that it cannot rest, or if its own mass be so increased by flood that its usual resting-places are not sufficient for it, but that it is perpetually pushed out of them by the following current, before it has had time to tranquilize itself, it of course gains velocity with every yard that it runs ; the impetus got at one leap is carried to the credit of the next, until the whole stream becomes one mass of unchecked, accelerating motion. Now when water in this state comes to an obstacle, it does not part at it, but clears it, like a race-horse ; and when it comes to a hollow, it does not fill it up and run out leisurely at the other side, but it rushes down into it and comes up again on the other side, as a ship into the hollow of the sea. Hence the whole appearance of the bed of the stream is changed, and all the lines of the water altered in their nature. The quiet stream is a succession of leaps and pools ; the leaps are light and springy,⁴ and parabolic, and make a great deal of splashing when they tumble into the pool ; then we have a space of quiet curdling water, and another similar leap below. But the stream when it has gained an impetus takes the shape of its bed, never stops, is equally deep and equally swift everywhere, goes down into every hollow, not with a leap, but with a swing, not foaming, nor splashing, but in the bending line of a strong sea-wave, and comes up again on the other side, over rock and ridge, with the ease of a bounding leopard ; if it meet a rock three or four feet above the level of its bed, it will neither

WATER

part nor foam, nor express any concern about the matter, but clear it in a smooth dome of water, without apparent exertion, coming down again as smoothly on the other side ; the whole surface of the surge being drawn into parallel lines by its extreme velocity, but foamless, except in places where the form of the bed opposes itself at some direct angle to such a line of fall, and causes a breaker ; so that the whole river has the appearance of a deep and raging sea, with this only difference, that the torrent-waves always break backwards, and sea-waves forward. Thus, then, in the water which has gained an impetus, we have the most exquisite arrangements of curved lines, perpetually changing from convex to concave, and *vice versa*, following every swell and hollow of the bed with their modulating grace, and all in unison of motion, presenting perhaps the most beautiful series of inorganic forms⁵ which nature can possibly produce ; for the sea runs too much into similar and concave curves with sharp edges, but every motion of the torrent is united, and all its curves are modifications of beautiful line. . . .

Few people, comparatively, have ever seen the effect on the sea of a powerful gale continued without intermission for three or four days and nights, and to those who have not, I believe it must be unimaginable, not from the mere force or size of surge, but from the complete annihilation of the limit between sea and air. The water from its prolonged agitation is beaten, not into mere creaming foam, but into masses of accumulated yeast, which hang in ropes and wreaths from wave to wave, and where one curls over to break, form a festoon like a drapery, from its edge ; these are taken up by the wind, not in dissipating dust, but bodily, in writhing, hanging, coiling masses, which make the air white and thick as with snow, only the flakes are a foot or two long each ; the surges themselves are full of foam in their very bodies, underneath, making them white all through, as the water is under a great cataract ; and their masses, being thus half water and half air, are torn to pieces by the wind whenever they rise, and carried away in roaring smoke,

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

which chokes and strangles like actual water. Add to this, that when the air has been exhausted of its moisture by long rain, the spray of the sea is caught by it and covers its surface not merely with the smoke of finely divided water, but with boiling mist ; imagine also the low rain-clouds brought down to the very level of the sea, as I have often seen them, whirling and flying in rags and fragments from wave to wave ; and finally, conceive the surges themselves in their utmost pitch of power, velocity, vastness, and madness, lifting themselves in precipices and peaks, furrowed with their whirl of ascent, through all this chaos ; and you will understand that there is indeed no distinction left between the sea and air ; that no object, nor horizon, nor any landmark or natural evidence of position is left ; that the heaven is all spray, and the ocean all cloud, and that you can see no farther in any direction than you could see through a cataract⁶. . . .

Modern Painters, vol. i, Part II, Sect. V, ch. iii

A wet sheet and a flowing sea,
A wind that follows fast,
And fills the white and rustling sail,
And bends the gallant mast ;
And bends the gallant mast, my boys,
While, like the eagle free,
Away the good ship flies, and leaves
Old England on the lee.

O for a soft and gentle wind !
I heard a fair one cry ;
But give to me the snoring breeze
And white waves heaving high ;
And white waves heaving high, my boys,
The good ship tight and free—
The world of waters is our home,
And merry men are we.

A. CUNNINGHAM

TREES

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. Study a pool of water. Write a description of what you see, especially of something you had not noticed before.
2. Make a drawing of a swan on a lake.
3. Say what there is that pleases you in Ruskin's epithets :
 - (a) "dark serious blue";
 - (b) "chiselled into grace";
 - (c) "wild, various, fantastic, tameless unity of the sea";
 - (d) "light and springy, and parabolic."
4. What is the great difference between river-waves and sea-waves?
5. What pictures have you seen of (a) a stormy sea; (b) a calm sea? Describe one of them and say who painted it.
6. Find some stirring verses on the sea, or some peculiarities of the behaviour of water.

TREES

It will be best to begin as nature does, with the stems and branches, and then to put the leaves on. And in speaking of trees generally, be it observed, when I say *all* trees, I mean only those ordinary forest or copse trees of Europe, which are the chief subjects of the landscape painter. I do not mean to include every kind of foliage which by any accident can find its way into a picture, but the ordinary trees of Europe—oak, elm, ash, hazel, willow, birch, beech, poplar, chestnut, pine, mulberry, olive, ilex, carubbe, and such others. I do not purpose to examine the characteristics of each tree; it will be enough to observe the laws common to all. First, then, neither the stems nor the boughs of any of the above trees *taper*, except where they fork. Wherever a stem sends off a branch, or a branch a lesser bough, or a lesser bough a bud, the stem or the branch is, on the instant, less in diameter by the exact quantity of the branch or the bough they have sent off, and they remain of the same diameter; or if there be any change, rather increase than diminish until they send off another branch or bough. This law is imperative and

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

without exception ; no bough, nor stem, nor twig, ever tapering or becoming narrower toward its extremity by a hair's breadth, save where it parts with some portion of its substance at a fork or bud, so that if all the twigs and sprays at the top and sides of the tree, which are, and *have been*, could be united without loss of space, they would form a round log of the diameter of the trunk from which they spring.

But as the trunks of most trees send off twigs and sprays of light under foliage, of which every individual fibre takes precisely its own thickness of wood from the parent stem, and as many of these drop off, leaving nothing but a small excrescence to record their existence, there is frequently a slight and delicate appearance of tapering bestowed on the trunk itself ; while the same operation takes place much more extensively in the branches, it being natural to almost all trees to send out from their young limbs more wood than they can support, which, as the stem increases, gets contracted at the point of insertion, so as to check the flow of the sap, and then dies and drops off, leaving all along the bough, first on one side, then on another, a series of small excrescences, sufficient to account for a degree of tapering, which is yet so very slight, that if we select a portion of a branch with no real fork or living bough to divide it or diminish it, the tapering is scarcely to be detected by the eye ; and if we select a portion without such evidences of past ramification, there will be found none whatsoever.

But nature takes great care and pains to conceal this uniformity in her boughs. They are perpetually parting with little sprays here and there, which steal away their substance cautiously, and where the eye does not perceive the theft, until, a little way above, it feels the loss ; and in the upper parts of the tree, the ramifications take place so constantly and delicately, that the effect upon the eye is precisely the same as if the boughs actually tapered, except here and there, where some avaricious one, greedy of substance, runs on for two or three yards without parting with anything, and becomes ungraceful in so doing.

LEAFAGE

Hence we see that although boughs may, and must be represented as actually tapering, they must only be so when they are sending off foliage and sprays, and when they are at such a distance that the particular forks and divisions cannot be evident to the eye; and, farther, even in such circumstances, the tapering never can be sudden or rapid. No bough ever, with appearance of smooth tapering, loses more than one-tenth of its diameter in a length of ten diameters. Any greater diminution than this must be accounted for by visible ramification,¹ and must take place by steps, at each fork.

Modern Painters, vol. i, Part II, Sect. VI, ch. i

LEAFAGE

ONE of the most remarkable characters of natural leafage is the constancy with which, while the leaves are arranged on the spray with exquisite regularity, that regularity is modified in their actual effect. For as in every group of leaves some are seen sideways, forming merely long lines, some foreshortened, some crossing each other, every one differently turned and placed from all the others, the forms of the leaves, though in themselves similar, give rise to a thousand strange and differing forms in the group; and the shadows of some, passing over the others, still farther disguise and confuse the mass, until the eye can distinguish nothing but a graceful and flexible disorder² of innumerable forms, with here and there a perfect leaf on the extremity, or a symmetrical association of one or two, just enough to mark the specific character and to give unity and grace, but never enough to repeat in one group what was done in another—never enough to prevent the eye from feeling that, however regular and mathematical may be the structure of parts, what is composed out of them is as various and infinite as any other part of nature. Nor does this take place in general effect only. Break off an elm bough, three feet long, in full leaf, and lay it on the table before you, and try to draw it, leaf for leaf.

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

It is ten to one if in the whole bough (provided you do not twist it about as you work) you find one form of a leaf exactly like another ; perhaps you will not even have *one* complete. Every leaf will be oblique, or foreshortened, or curled, or crossed by another, or shaded by another, or have something or other the matter with it ; and though the whole bough will look graceful and symmetrical, you will scarcely be able to tell how or why it does so, since there is not one line of it like another.

Modern Painters, vol. i, Part II, Sect. VI, ch. i

A shadie grove . . .

Whose loftie trees, yclad with sommer's pride,
Did spred so broad that heavens light did hide,
Not perceable with power of any starr ;
And alle within were pathes and alleies wide. . . .

Much can they praise the trees so straight and hy,
The sayling Pine ; the Cedar proud and tall ;
The vine-propp Elme ; the Poplar never dry ;
The builder Oake, sole king of forrests all ;
The Aspine good for staves ; the Cypresse funerall ;

The Laurell, meed of mightie Conquerours
And Poets sage ; the Firre that weepeth still ;
The Willow, worne of forlorne Paramours ;
The Eugh, obedient to the benders will ;
The Birch for shaftes ; the Sallow for the mill ;
The Mirrhe sweete-bleeding in the bitter wound ;
The warlike Beech ; the Ash for nothing ill ;
The fruitfull Olive ; and the Platane round ;
The carver Holme ; the Maple seeldom inward sound.

SPENSER, *Faerie Queene*, I, i

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. Which of Ruskin's statements about trees have you found to be the most interesting and curious ?
2. How do you know the different kinds of trees when the leaves are off ?
3. Make a list of quotations in verse or prose about trees.

BEAUTY IN NATURE

4. What songs do you know in praise of British trees ?
5. Make drawings of the different kinds of leaves (as named in a botany book).
6. Write something about any three of the trees named in Spenser's verse, with any interesting historical details, or fables, or legends.

BEAUTY IN NATURE

THROUGHOUT the whole of the organic creation every being in a perfect state exhibits certain appearances or evidences, of happiness, and besides is in its nature, its desires, its modes of nourishment, habitation, and death, illustrative or expressive of certain moral dispositions or principles. Now, first, in the keenness of the sympathy which we feel in the happiness, real or apparent, of all organic beings, and which, as we shall presently see, invariably prompts us, from the joy we have in it, to look upon those as most lovely which are most happy ; and secondly, in the justness of the moral sense which rightly reads the lesson they are all intended to teach, and classes them in orders of worthiness and beauty according to the rank and nature of that lesson, whether it be of warning or example, of those that wallow or of those that soar, of the fiend hunted swine by the Gennesaret lake, or of the dove returning to its ark of rest ; in our right accepting and reading of all this, consists, I say, the ultimately perfect condition of that noble theoretic faculty¹ [the contemplation of the Beautiful as the gift of God]. . . .

Its first perfection, therefore . . . is the kindness and unselfish fullness of heart, which receives the utmost amount of pleasure from the happiness of all things. Of which in high degree the heart of man is incapable. . . .

Wherefore it is evident that even the ordinary exercise of this faculty implies a condition of the whole moral being in some measure right and healthy, and that to the entire exercise of it there is necessary the entire perfection of the Christian character, for he who loves not God, nor his brother, cannot love the grass beneath his feet and the creatures that

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

fill those spaces in the universe which he needs not, and which live not for his uses ; nay he has seldom grace to be grateful even to those that love him and serve him, while, on the other hand, none can love God, nor his human brother, without loving all things which his Father loves, nor without looking upon them every one as in that respect his brethren also, and perhaps worthier than he, if in the under concords they have to fill, their part is touched more truly. Wherefore it is good to read of that kindness and humbleness of St Francis of Assisi, who spoke never to bird nor to cicala, nor even to wolf and beast of prey, but as his brother ; and so we find are moved the minds of all good and mighty men, as in the lesson that we have from the *Mariner* of Coleridge, and yet more truly and rightly taught in the *Hartleap Well*, " never to blend our pleasure, or our pride, with sorrow of the meanest thing that feels " ; and again in the *White Doe of Rylstone*, with the added teaching of that gift, which we have from things beneath us, in thanks for the love they cannot equally return ; that anguish of our own " is tempered and allayed by sympathies, Aloft ascending and descending deep, Even to the inferior kinds." . . .

As we pass from those beings of whose happiness and pain we are certain to those in which it is doubtful or only seeming, as possibly in plants (though I would fain hold, if I might, " the faith that every flower enjoys the air it breathes," neither do I ever crush or gather one without some pain), yet our feeling for them has in it more of sympathy than of actual love, as receiving from them in delight far more than we can give ; for love, I think, chiefly grows in giving, at least its essence is the desire of doing good, or giving happiness, and we cannot feel the desire of that which we cannot conceive, so that if we conceive not of a plant as capable of pleasure, we cannot desire to give it pleasure, that is, we cannot love it in the entire sense of the term. Nevertheless, the sympathy of very lofty and sensitive minds usually reaches so far as to the conception of life in the plant, and so to love, as with Shelley, of the sensitive

BEAUTY IN NATURE

plant, and Shakespeare always, as he has taught us in the sweet voices of Ophelia and Perdita,² and Wordsworth always, as of the daffodils, and the celandine.

It doth not love the shower, nor seek the cold.
This neither is its courage, nor its choice,
But its necessity in being old,³

and so all other great poets (that is to say, great seers) nor do I believe that any mind, however rude, is without some slight perception or acknowledgment of joyfulness in breathless things, as most certainly there are none but feel instinctive delight in the appearances of such enjoyment.

For it is matter of easy demonstration, that setting the characters of typical beauty aside, the pleasure afforded by every organic form is in proportion to its appearance of healthy vital energy ; as in a rosebush, setting aside all the considerations of gradated flushing of colour and fair folding of line, which it shares with the cloud or the snow-wreath, we find in and through all this, certain signs pleasant and acceptable as signs of life and enjoyment in the particular individual plant itself. Every leaf and stalk is seen to have a function, to be constantly exercising that function, and as it seems, *solely* for the good and enjoyment of the plant. It is true that reflection will show us that the plant is not living for itself alone, that its life is one of benefaction, that it gives as well as receives, but no sense of this whatsoever mingles with our perception of physical beauty in its forms. Those forms appear to be necessary to its health, the symmetry of its leaflets, the smoothness of its stalks, the vivid green of its shoots, are looked upon by us as signs of the plant's own happiness and perfection ; they are useless to us, except as they give us pleasure in our sympathizing with that of the plant, and if we see a leaf withered or shrunk or worm-eaten, we say it is ugly, and feel it to be most painful, not because it hurts *us*, but because it seems to hurt the plant, and conveys to us an idea of pain and disease and failure of life in *it*. . . .

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

Still more distinct evidence of its being indeed the expression of happiness to which we look for our first pleasure in organic form, is to be found in the way in which we regard the bodily frame of animals : of which it is to be noted first, that there is not anything which causes so intense and tormenting a sense of ugliness as any scar, wound, monstrosity, or imperfection which seems inconsistent with the animal's ease and health ; and that although in vegetables, where there is no immediate sense of pain, we are comparatively little hurt by excrescences and irregularities, but are sometimes even delighted with them, and fond of them, as children of the oak-apple, and sometimes look upon them as more interesting than the uninjured conditions, as in the gnarled and knotted trunks of trees ; yet the slightest approach to anything of the kind in animal form is regarded with intense horror, merely from the sense of pain it conveys. And, in the second place, it is to be noted that whenever we dissect the animal frame, or conceive it as dissected, and substitute in our ideas the neatness of mechanical contrivance for the pleasure of the animal ; the moment we reduce enjoyment to ingenuity, and volition to leverage, that instant all sense of beauty disappears. Take, for instance, the action of the limb of the ostrich, which is beautiful so long as we see it in its swift uplifting along the Desert sands, and trace in the tread of it her scorn of the horse and his rider, but would infinitely lose of its impressiveness, if we could see the spring ligament playing backward and forward in alternate jerks over the tubercle at the hock joint. Take again the action of the dorsal fin of the shark tribe. So long as we observe the uniform energy of motion in the whole frame, the lash of the tail, bound of body, and instantaneous lowering of the dorsal, to avoid the resistance of the water, as it turns, there is high sense of organic power and beauty. But when we dissect the dorsal, and find that its superior ray is supported in its position by a peg in a notch at its base, and that when the fin is to be lowered, the peg has to be taken out, and, when it is raised, put in again ; although we are filled with wonder

BEAUTY IN NATURE

at the ingenuity of the mechanical contrivance, all our sense of beauty is gone, and not to be recovered until we again see the fin playing on the animal's body, apparently by its own will alone, with the life running along its rays. It is by a beautiful ordinance of the Creator that all these mechanisms are concealed from sight, though open to investigation, and that in all which is outwardly manifested we seem to see His presence rather than His workmanship, and the mysterious breath of life, rather than the manipulation of matter.

As it, therefore, appears from all evidence that it is the sense of felicity which we first desire in organic form, it is evident from reason, as demonstrable by experience, that those forms will be the most beautiful which exhibit most of power, and seem capable of most quick and joyous sensation. Hence we find gradations of beauty, from the apparent impenetrableness of hide and slow motion of the elephant and the rhinoceros, from the foul occupation of the vulture, from the earthy struggling of the worm, to the brilliancy of the butterfly, the buoyancy of the bird, the swiftness of the fawn and the horse, the fair and kingly sensibility of man.

Modern Painters, vol. ii, Part III, Sect. I, ch. xii

So far as the sight and knowledge of the human form, of the purest race, exercised from infancy constantly, but not excessively in all exercises of dignity, not in twists and straining dexterities, but in natural exercises of running, casting, or riding; practised in endurance, not of extraordinary hardship, for that hardens and degrades the body, but of natural hardship, vicissitudes of winter and summer, and cold and heat, yet in a climate where none of these are severe; surrounded also by a certain degree of right luxury, so as to soften the forms of strength; so far as the sight of all this could render the mental intelligence of what is right in human form so acute as to be able to abstract and combine from the best examples so produced, that which was most perfect in each, so far the Greek conceived and attained the ideal of bodily form: and on the Greek modes of attaining it, as well

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

as on what he produced, as a perfect example of it, chiefly dwell those writers whose opinions on this subject I have collected ; wholly losing sight of what seems to me the most important branch of the inquiry, namely, the influence for good or evil of the mind upon the bodily shape. . . .

The operation of the mind upon the body and evidence of it thereon may be considered under the following three general heads.

First, the operation of the intellectual powers upon the features, in the fine cutting and chiselling of them, and removal from them of signs of sensuality and sloth, by which they are blunted and deadened, and substitution of energy and intensity for vacancy and insipidity (by which wants alone the faces of many fair women are utterly spoiled and rendered valueless), and by the keenness given to the eye and fine moulding and development to the brow. . . .

The second point to be considered in the influence of mind upon body, is the mode of operation and conjunction of the moral feelings on and with the intellectual powers, and then their conjoint influence on the bodily form. Now, the operation of the right moral feelings on the intellect is always for the good of the latter, for it is not possible that selfishness should reason rightly in any respect, but must be blind in its estimation of the worthiness of all things ; neither anger, for that overpowers the reason or outcries it ; neither sensuality, for that overgrows and chokes it ; neither agitation, for that has no time to compare things together ; neither enmity, for that must be unjust ; neither fear, for that exaggerates all things ; neither cunning and deceit, for that which is voluntarily untrue will soon be unwittingly so : but the great reasoners are self-command, and trust unagitated, and deep-looking Love, and Faith, which as she is above Reason so she best holds the reins of it from her high seat : so that they err grossly who think of the right development even of the intellectual type as possible, unless we look to higher sources of beauty first. . . .

The third point to be considered with respect to the

BEAUTY IN NATURE

corporeal expression of mental character is, that there is a certain period of the soul-culture when it begins to interfere with some of the characters of typical beauty belonging to the bodily frame, the stirring of the intellect wearing down the flesh, and the moral enthusiasm burning its way out to heaven, through the emaciation of the earthen vessel ; and that there is, in this indication of subduing of the mortal by the immortal part, an ideal glory of perhaps a purer and higher range than that of the more perfect material form. We conceive, I think, more nobly of the weak presence of Paul,⁴ than of the fair and ruddy countenance of David. . . .

Such inconsistencies we should find in the perfections of no other animal. The strength or swiftness of the Dog are not inconsistent with his sagacity, nor is bodily labour in the Ant and Bee destructive of their acuteness of instinct. And this peculiarity of relation among the perfections of man is no result of his fall or sinfulness, but an evidence of his greater nobility, and of the goodness of God toward him. For the individuals of each race of lower animals, being not intended to hold among each other those relations of charity which are the privilege of humanity, are not adapted to each other's assistance, admiration, or support, by differences of power and function. But the Love of the human race is increased by their individual differences, and the Unity of the Creature, as before we saw of all unity, made perfect by each having something to bestow and to receive, bound to the rest by a thousand various necessities and various gratitudes, humility in each rejoicing to admire in his fellow that which he finds not in himself, and each being in some respect the complement of his race. . . . We have not to banish from the ideal countenance the evidences of sorrow, nor of past suffering, nor even of past and conquered sin, but only the immediate operation of any evil, or the immediate coldness and hollowness of any good emotion.

Modern Painters, vol. ii, Part III, ch. xiv

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

Then looke, who list thy gazefull eyes to feed
With sight of that is faire, looke on the frame
Of this wyde universe, and therein reed
The endlesse kinds of creatures which by name
Thou canst not count, much lesse their natures aime ;
All which are made with wondrous wise respect,
And all with admirable beautie deckt.

First, th' Earth, on adamantine pillars founded
Amid the Sea, engirt with brasen bands ;
Amid th' Aire still flitting, but yet firmly bounded
On everie side, with pyles of flaming brands,
Never consum'd, nor quencht with mortall hands ;
And, last, that mightie shining christall wall
Wherewith He hath encompassèd this All.

SPENSER, *An Hymne of Heavenly Beautie*

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. Do you know of any other writer who speaks of the happiness of created things or of the ways in which they express it ?
2. Learn the eloquent lines, "As it, therefore, appears . . . kingly sensibility of man" (page 43).
3. Why does neither a prize-fighter nor a doll give a true idea of human beauty ?
4. Write a paragraph on (a) "We seem to see His presence rather than His workmanship" ; (b) "Those forms will be most beautiful which exhibit most of power."
5. Make a sketch of a group of oak-apples and other 'excrescences' beside a gnarled piece of bark.
6. Do you see the beauty of the human figure better in statues than in paintings ? Why ?

FROM "ETHICS OF THE DUST"

[This little book contains the substance of some informal lectures given during the sixties to the young pupils in a girls' school. Those were the days when no science was taught to girls and but little to boys. Ruskin's purpose is not to impart information merely as to the structure of crystals, but to stir the imaginations of his hearers and move them to wonder and delight. And here, as always, he deduces moral truths from physical laws, whence his title to the book. This extract gives only the lecturer's discourse, with a very few of the intelligent questions asked by members of the class.]

CRYSTAL SORROWS

WE have been hitherto talking as if crystals might live, and play, and quarrel, and behave ill or well, according to their characters, without interruption from anything else. But so far from this being so, nearly all crystals, whatever their characters, have to live a hard life of it,¹ and meet with many misfortunes. If we could see far enough, we should find, indeed, that, at the root, all their vices were misfortunes: but to-day I want you to see what sort of troubles the best crystals have to go through, occasionally, by no fault of their own.

This black thing, which is one of the prettiest of the very few pretty black things in the world, is called "Tourmaline." It may be transparent, and green, or red, as well as black; and then no stone can be prettier; (only, all the light that gets into it, I believe, comes out a good deal the worse; and is not itself again for a long while). But this is the commonest state of it,—opaque, and as black as jet.

M. 2. What is it made of?

A little of everything; there's always flint, and clay, and magnesia in it; and the black is iron, according to its fancy; and there's boracic acid, if you know what that is; . . . and there's potash, and soda; and, on the whole, the

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

chemistry of it is more like a mediæval doctor's prescription than the making of a respectable mineral ; but it may, perhaps, be owing to the strange complexity of its make, that it has a notable habit which makes it, to me, one of the most interesting of minerals. You see these two crystals are broken right across, in many places, just as if they had been shafts of black marble fallen from a ruinous temple ; and here they lie, imbedded in white quartz, fragment succeeding fragment, keeping the line of the original crystal, while the quartz fills up the intervening spaces. Now tourmaline has a trick of doing this, more than any other mineral I know : here is another bit which I picked up on the glacier of Macugnaga ; it is broken, like a pillar built of very flat, broad stones, into about thirty joints, and all these are heaved and warped away from each other sideways, almost into a line of steps ; and then all is filled up with quartz paste. And here, lastly, is a green Indian piece, in which the pillar is first disjointed, and then wrung round into the shape of an S.

M. 3. How *can* this have been done ?

There are a thousand ways in which it may have been done ; the difficulty is not to account for the doing of it ; but for the showing of it in some crystals, and not in others. You never by any chance get a quartz crystal broken or twisted in this way. If it break or twist at all, which it does sometimes, like the spire of Dijon, it is by its own will or fault ; it never seems to have been passively crushed. But, for the forces which cause this passive ruin of the tourmaline,—here is a stone which will show you multitudes of them in operation at once. It is known as “ brecciated agate,” * beautiful, as you see ; and highly valued as a pebble : yet, so far as I can read or hear, no one has ever looked at it with the least attention. At the first glance, you see it is made of very fine red striped agates, which have been broken into small pieces, and fastened together again by paste, also of agate. There would be nothing wonderful in this, if this were all. It is well known that by the movements of strata, portions of rock are often shattered to pieces :—well known also that agate

CRYSTAL SORROWS

is a deposit of flint by water under certain conditions of heat and pressure : there is, therefore, nothing wonderful in an agate's being broken ; and nothing wonderful in its being mended with the solution out of which it was itself originally congealed. And with this explanation, most people, looking at a brecciated agate, or brecciated anything, seem to be satisfied. I was so myself for twenty years ; but, lately happening to stay for some time at the Swiss Baden, where the beach of the Limmat is almost wholly composed of brecciated limestones, I began to examine them thoughtfully ; and perceived, in the end, that they were, one and all, knots of as rich mystery as any poor little human brain was ever lost in. That piece of agate in your hand, Mary, will show you many of the common phenomena of breccias : but you need not knit your brows over it in that way ; depend upon it, neither you nor I shall ever know anything about the way it was made, as long as we live. . . .

However, there are certain facts, about this agate-making, which I can tell you ; and then you may look at it in a pleasant wonder as long as you like ; pleasant wonder is no loss of time.

First, then, it is not broken freely by a blow ; it is slowly wrung, or ground, to pieces. You can only with extreme dimness conceive the force exerted on mountains in transitional states of movement. You have all read a little geology ; and you know how coolly geologists talk of mountains being raised or depressed. They talk coolly of it, because they are accustomed to the fact ; but the very universality of the fact prevents us from ever conceiving distinctly the conditions of force involved. You know I was living last year in Savoy ; my house was on the back of a sloping mountain, which rose gradually for two miles, behind it ; and then fell at once in a great precipice toward Geneva, going down three thousand feet in four or five cliffs, or steps. Now that whole group of cliffs had simply been torn away by sheer strength from the rocks below, as if the whole mass had been as soft as biscuit. Put four or five captain's biscuits on the floor, on the top of

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

one another ; and try to break them all in half, not by bending, but by holding one half down, and tearing the other halves up ;—of course you will not be able to do it, but you will feel and comprehend the sort of force needed. Then, fancy each captains' biscuit a bed of rock, six or seven hundred feet thick ; and the whole mass torn straight through ; and one half heaved up three thousand feet, grinding against the other as it rose,—and you will have some idea of the making of the Mont Salève.

M. 5. But it must crush the rocks all to dust !

No ; for there is no room for dust. The pressure is too great ; probably the heat developed also so great that the rock is made partly ductile ; but the worst of it is, that we never can see these parts of mountains in the state they were left in at the time of their elevation ; for it is precisely in these rents and dislocations that the crystalline power principally exerts itself. It is essentially a styptic power,³ and wherever the earth is torn, it heals and binds : nay, the torture and grieving of the earth seem necessary to bring out its full energy ; for you only find the crystalline living power fully in action where the rents and faults are deep and many.

M. 6. What are " faults " ? . . .

When a vein of rock which is going on smoothly, is interrupted by another troublesome little vein, which stops it, and puts it out, so that it has to begin again in another place—that is called a fault. *I* always think it ought to be called the fault of the vein that interrupts it ; but the miners always call it the fault of the vein that is interrupted. . . .

When beds of rock are only interrupted by a fissure, but remain at the same level, like the two halves of the table, it is not called a fault, but only a fissure ; but if one half of the table be either tilted higher than the other, or pushed to the side, so that the two parts will not fit, it is a fault. You had better read the chapter on faults in Jukes's *Geology* ; then you will know all about it. And this rent that *I* am telling you of in the Salève, is one only of myriads, to which are owing the forms of the Alps, as, *I* believe, of all great moun-

CRYSTAL SORROWS

tain chains. Wherever you see a precipice on any scale of real magnificence, you will nearly always find it owing to some dislocation of this kind ; but the point of chief wonder to me, is the delicacy of the touch by which these gigantic rents have been apparently accomplished. Note, however, that we have no clear evidence, hitherto, of the time taken to produce any of them. We know that a change of temperature alters the position and the angles of the atoms of crystals, and also the entire bulk of rocks. We know that in all volcanic, and the greater part of all subterranean, action, temperatures are continually changing, and therefore masses of rock must be expanding or contracting, with infinite slowness, but with infinite force. This pressure must result in mechanical strain somewhere, both in their own substance, and in that of the rocks surrounding them ; and we can form no conception of the result of irresistible pressure, applied so as to rend and raise, with imperceptible slowness of gradation, masses thousands of feet in thickness. We want some experiments tried on masses of iron and stone ; and we can't get them tried, because Christian creatures never will seriously and sufficiently spend money, except to find out the shortest ways of killing each other. But, besides this slow kind of pressure, there is evidence of more or less sudden violence, on the same terrific scale ; and, through it all, the wonder, as I said, is always to me the delicacy of touch. I cut a block of the Salève limestone from the edge of one of the principal faults which have formed the precipice ; it is a lovely compact limestone, and the fault itself is filled up with a red breccia, formed of the crushed fragments of the torn rock, cemented by a rich red crystalline paste. I have had the piece I cut from it smoothed, and polished across the junction ; here it is ; and you may now pass your soft little fingers over the surface, without so much as feeling the place where a rock which all the hills of England might have been sunk in the body of, and not a summit seen, was torn asunder through that whole thickness, as a thin dress is torn when you tread upon it. . . .

M. 7. But this is almost marble ?

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

It is quite marble. And another singular point in the business, to my mind, is that these stones, which men have been cutting into slabs, for thousands of years, to ornament their principal buildings with,—and which, under the general name of “marble,” have been the delight of the eyes, and the wealth of architecture, among all civilized nations,—are precisely those on which the signs and brands of these earth-agonies have been chiefly struck; and there is not a purple vein nor flaming zone in them, which is not the record of their ancient torture. What a boundless capacity for sleep, and for serene stupidity, there is in the human mind! Fancy reflective beings, who cut and polish stones for three thousand years, for the sake of the pretty stains upon them; and educate themselves to an art at last (such as it is), of imitating these veins by dexterous painting;—and never a curious soul of them, all that while, asks, “What painted the rocks?” . . .

Now, however, for once, look at a piece of marble carefully, and think about it. You see this is one side of the fault; the other side is down or up, nobody knows where; but, on this side, you can trace the evidence of the dragging and tearing action. All along the edge of this marble, the ends of the fibres of the rock are torn, here an inch, and there half an inch, away from each other; and you see the exact places where they fitted, before they were torn separate; and you see the rents are now all filled up with the sanguine paste,⁴ full of the broken pieces of the rock; the paste itself seems to have been half melted, and partly to have also melted the edge of the fragments it contains, and then to have crystallized with them, and round them. And the brecciated agate I first showed you contains exactly the same phenomena; a zoned crystallization⁵ going on amidst the cemented fragments, partly altering the structure of those fragments themselves, and subject to continual change, either in the intensity of its own power, or in the nature of the materials submitted to it;—so that, at one time, gravity acts upon them, and disposes them in horizontal layers, or causes them to droop in stalactites;⁶ and at another, gravity is entirely defied, and the substances

CRYSTAL SORROWS

in solution are crystallized in bands of equal thickness on every side of the cell. It would require a course of lectures longer than these, . . . to describe to you the phenomena of this kind, in agates and chalcedonies only ;—nay, there is a single sarcophagus in the British Museum, covered with grand sculpture of the 18th dynasty, which contains in the magnificent breccia (agates and jaspers imbedded in porphyry), out of which it is hewn, material for the thought of years ; and record of the earth-sorrow of ages in comparison with the duration of which, the Egyptian letters tell us but the history of the evening and morning of a day.

Agates, I think, of all stones, confess most of their past history ; but all crystallization goes on under, and partly records, circumstances of this kind—circumstances of infinite variety, but always involving difficulty, interruption, and change of condition at different times. Observe, first, you have the whole mass of the rock in motion, either contracting itself, and so gradually widening the cracks ; or being compressed, and thereby closing them, and crushing their edges ;—and, if one part of its substance be softer, at the given temperature, than another, probably squeezing that softer substance out into the veins. Then the veins themselves, when the rock leaves them open by its contraction, act with various power of suction⁷ upon its substance ;—by capillary attraction when they are fine,—by that of pure vacuity when they are larger, or by changes in the constitution and condensation of the mixed gases with which they have been originally filled. Those gases themselves may be supplied in all variation of volume and power from below ; or, slowly, by the decomposition of the rocks themselves ; and, at changing temperatures, must exert relatively changing forces of decomposition and combination on the walls of the veins they fill ; while water, at every degree of heat and pressure (from beds of everlasting ice, alternate with cliffs of native rock, to volumes of red hot, or white hot, steam), congeals, and drips, and throbs, and thrills, from crag to crag ; and breathes from pulse to pulse of foaming or fiery arteries, whose beating is felt through

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

chains of the great islands of the Indian seas, as your own pulses lift your bracelets, and makes whole kingdoms of the world quiver in deadly earthquake, as if they were light as aspen leaves. And, remember, the poor little crystals have to live their lives, and mind their own affairs, in the midst of all this, as best they may. They are wonderfully like human creatures,—forget all that is going on if they don't see it, however dreadful ; and never think what is to happen to-morrow. They are spiteful or loving, and indolent or painstaking, and orderly or licentious, with no thought whatever of the lava or the flood which may break over them any day ; and evaporate them into air-bubbles, or wash them into a solution of salts. And you may look at them, once understanding the surrounding conditions of their fate, with an endless interest. You will see crowds of unfortunate little crystals, who have been forced to constitute themselves in a hurry, their dissolving element being fiercely scorched away ; you will see them doing their best, bright and numberless, but tiny. Then you will find indulged crystals, who have had centuries to form themselves in, and have changed their mind and ways continually ; and have been tired, and taken heart again ; and have been sick, and got well again ; and thought they would try a different diet, and then thought better of it ; and made but a poor use of their advantages, after all. And others you will see, who have begun life as wicked crystals ; and then have been impressed by alarming circumstances, and have become converted crystals, and behaved amazingly for a little while, and fallen away again, and ended, but discreditably, perhaps even in decomposition ; so that one doesn't know what will become of them. And sometimes you will see deceitful crystals, that look as soft as velvet, and are deadly to all near them ; and sometimes you will see deceitful crystals, that seem flint-edged, like our little quartz-crystal . . . and are endlessly gentle and true wherever gentleness and truth are needed.

Ethics of the Dust, Lect. IX

CRYSTAL SORROWS

Only matter's dense opaqueness
Checks God's light from shining through it,
And our senses (such their weakness)
Cannot help our souls to view it.
Till Love lends the world translucence :
Then we see God clear in all things !

LYTTON

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. Find out something interesting about (a) crystallization ;
(b) the behaviour of rays of light on entering certain media ;
(c) the seven materials in tourmaline.
2. Where do we find precious stones mentioned in literature ?
What legends or fancies do you know connected with them ?
3. Write a short theme on " Agates, I think, of all stones, confess
most of their past history."
4. Which three details that Ruskin tells us in this lecture
seem to you most wonderful ?
5. Where have you seen (a) beautiful marble pillars ; (b)
beautiful precious stones ?
6. Collect some examples of ' attraction ' from science and
from legend.

FROM "QUEEN OF THE AIR"

[This book consists of three lectures prepared by Ruskin in 1869, and the first one was given in part at University College. In the third, "Athena in the Heart," is incorporated the matter of a pamphlet, written the year before, on wealth and its uses. Ruskin took his original subjects from Greek art, poetry, and mythology; and in his interpretations finds much to say on things of our own day. He desires to bring to bear upon them the fine qualities of the Greek mind and attainments—"sound knowledge, simple aims, mastered craft."]

THE AIR WE BREATHE: ATHENA IN THE HEAVENS

A MYTH, in its simplest definition, is a story with a meaning attached to it, other than it seems to have at first; and the fact that it has such a meaning is generally marked by some of its circumstances being extraordinary or, in the common use of the word, unnatural. Thus, if I tell you that Hercules killed a water-serpent in the Lake of Lerna, and if I mean, and you understand, nothing more than that fact, the story whether true or false, is not a myth. But if, by telling you this, I mean that Hercules purified the stagnation of many streams from deadly miasmata,¹ my story, however simple, is a true myth; only, as, if I left it in that simplicity, you would probably look for nothing beyond, it will be wise in me to surprise your attention by adding some singular circumstance; for instance, that the water-snake had several heads which revived as fast as they were killed, and which poisoned even the foot that trode upon them as they slept. . . .

This story of Hercules and the Hydra, then, was to the general Greek mind, in its best days, a tale about a real hero and a real monster. Not one in a thousand knew anything of the way in which the story had arisen, any more than the English peasant generally is aware of the plebeian origin of St George; or supposes that there were once alive in the world,

THE AIR WE BREATHE

with sharp teeth and claws, real, and very ugly, flying dragons. On the other hand, few persons traced any moral or symbolical meaning in the story, and the average Greek was as far from imagining any interpretation like that I have just given you, as an average Englishman is from seeing in St George the Red Cross Knight of Spenser, or in the Dragon the Spirit of Infidelity. But, for all that, there was a certain under-current of consciousness in all minds, that the figures meant more than they at first showed ; and, according to each man's own faculties of sentiment, he judged and read them ; just as a Knight of the Garter reads more in the jewel on his collar than the George and Dragon of a public-house expresses to the host or to his customers. Thus, to the mean person the myth always meant little ;² to the noble person, much ; and the greater their familiarity with it, the more contemptible it became to the one, and the more sacred to the other : until vulgar commentators explained it entirely away, while Virgil made it the crowning glory of his choral hymn to Hercules :

Around thee, powerless to infect thy soul,
Rose, in his crested crown, the Lerna worm. . . .

But, if we seek to know more than this, and to ascertain the manner in which the story first crystallized into its shape, we shall find ourselves led back generally to one or other of two sources—either to actual historical events, represented by the fancy under figures personifying them ; or else to natural phenomena similarly endowed with life by the imaginative power, usually more or less under the influence of terror. The historical myths we must leave the masters of history to follow ; they, and the events they record, being yet involved in great, though attractive and penetrable, mystery. But the stars, and hills, and storms are with us now, as they were with others of old ; and it only needs that we look at them with the earnestness of those childish eyes to understand the first words spoken of them by the children of men. . . .

Now, at that culminating period of the Greek religion [about 500 B.C.]³ we find, under one governing Lord of all things,

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

four subordinate elemental forces, and four spiritual powers living in them and commanding them. The elements are of course the well-known four of the ancient world—the earth, the waters, the fire, and the air ; and the living powers of them are Demeter, the Latin Ceres ; Poseidon, the Latin Neptune ; Apollo, who has retained always his Greek name ; and Athena, the Latin Minerva. Each of these is descended from, or changed from, more ancient—and therefore more mystic—deities of the earth and heaven, and of a finer element of either supposed to be beyond the heavens ; but at this time we find the four quite definite, both in their kingdoms and in their personalities. They are the rulers of the earth that we tread upon and the air that we breathe, and are with us as closely, in their vivid humanity, as the dust that they animate and the winds that they bridle. . . .

The rule of the first spirit, Demeter, the earth mother, is over the earth, first, as the origin of all life—the dust from whence we were taken : secondly, as the receiver of all things back at last into silence—"Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." And, therefore, as the most tender image of this appearing and fading life, in the birth and fall of her flowers, her daughter Proserpine plays in the fields of Sicily, and thence is torn away into darkness, and becomes the Queen of Fate—not merely of death, but of the gloom which closes over and ends, not beauty only, but sin ; and chiefly of sins, the sin against the life she gave : so that she is, in her highest power, Persephone, the avenger and purifier of blood—"The voice of thy brother's blood cries to me *out of the ground.*" Then, side by side with this queen of the earth, we find a demigod of agriculture by the plough—the lord of grain, or of the thing ground by the mill. And it is a singular proof of the simplicity of Greek character at this noble time, that of all representations left to us of their deities by their art, few are so frequent, and none perhaps so beautiful, as the symbol of this spirit of agriculture. Then the dominant spirit of the element of water is Neptune, but subordinate to him are myriads of other water spirits, of whom Nereus is

THE AIR WE BREATHE

the chief, with Palæmon, and Leucothea the "white lady" of the sea, and Thetis and nymphs innumerable, who, like her, could "suffer a sea change"; while the river deities had each independent power, according to the preciousness of their streams to the cities fed by them—the "fountain Arethusa, and thou, honoured flood, smooth-sliding Mincius, crowned with vocal reeds." And, spiritually, this king of the waters is lord of the strength and daily flow of human life—he gives it material force and victory—which is the meaning of the dedication of the hair, as the sign of the strength of life, to the river of the native land.

Demeter, then, over the earth and its giving and receiving of life, Neptune over the waters and the flow and force of life,—always among the Greeks typified by the horse, which was to them as a crested sea-wave, animated and bridled. The third element, fire, has set over it two powers: over earthly fire, the assistant of human labour, is set Hephæstus, lord of all labour in which is the flush and the sweat of the brow; and over heavenly fire, the source of day, is set Apollo, the spirit of all kindling, purifying, and illuminating intellectual wisdom; each of these gods having also their subordinate or associated powers—servant, or sister, or companion muse.

Then, lastly, we come to the myth which is to be our subject of closer inquiry—the story of Athena and of the deities subordinate to her. This great goddess, the Neith of the Egyptians, the Athena or Athenaia of the Greeks, and, with broken power, half usurped by Mars, the Minerva of the Latins, is, physically, the queen of the air, having supreme power both over its blessings of calm, and wrath of storm; and, spiritually, she is the queen of the breath of man, first of the bodily breathing which is life to his blood, and strength to his arm in battle, and then of the mental breathing or inspiration, which is his moral health and habitual wisdom—wisdom of conduct and of the heart, as opposed to the wisdom of imagination and the brain; moral, as distinct from intellectual; inspired, as distinct from illuminated.

By a singular and fortunate, though I believe wholly

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

accidental, coincidence, the heart-virtue of which she is the spirit, was separated by the ancients into four divisions, which have since obtained acceptance from all men as rightly discerned, and have received, as if from the quarters of the four winds of which Athena is the natural queen, the name of "Cardinal" virtues, namely: Prudence (the right-seeing, and foreseeing, of events through darkness); Justice (the righteous bestowal of favour and of indignation); Fortitude (patience under trial by pain); and Temperance (patience under trial by pleasure). With respect to these four virtues, the attributes of Athena are all distinct. In her prudence, or sight in darkness, she is "Glaukopis," "owl-eyed." In her justice, which is the dominant virtue, she wears two robes, one of light and one of darkness; the robe of light, saffron colour, or the colour of the daybreak, falls to her feet, covering her wholly with favour and love,—the calm of the sky in blessing; it is embroidered along its edge with her victory over the giants (the troublous powers of the earth), and the likeness of it was woven yearly by the Athenian maidens and carried to the temple of their own Athena,—not to the Parthenon, that was the temple of all the world's Athena,—but this they carried to the temple of their own only one, who loved them, and stayed with them always. Then her robe of indignation is worn on her breast and left arm only, fringed with fatal serpents, and fastened with Gorgonian cold, turning men to stone; physically, the lightning and the hail of chastisement by storm. Then in her fortitude she wears the crested and unstooping helmet; and lastly, in her temperance she is the queen of maidenhood—stainless as the air of heaven. . . .

Let me now try to give you, however briefly, some distinct idea of the several agencies of this great goddess.

- i. She is the air giving life and health to all animals.
- ii. She is the air giving vegetative power to the earth.
- iii. She is the air giving motion to the sea and rendering navigation possible.
- iv. She is the air nourishing artificial light, torch or lamp-

THE AIR WE BREATHE

light, as opposed to that of the sun, on one hand,
and of *consuming* fire on the other.

v. She is the air conveying vibration of sound.

I will give you instances of her agency in all these functions.

First, and chiefly, she is air as the spirit of life, giving vitality to the blood. Her psychic relation⁴ to the vital force in matter lies deeper . . . but a great number of the most interesting passages in Homer regard her as flying over the earth in local and transitory strength, simply and merely the goddess of fresh air.

It is curious that the British city which has somewhat saucily styled itself the Modern Athens, is indeed more under her especial tutelage and favour in this respect than perhaps any other town in the island. Athena is first simply what in the Modern Athens you so practically find her, the breeze of the mountain and the sea ; and wherever she comes, there is purification, and health, and power. The sea-beach round this isle of ours is the frieze of our Parthenon ; every wave that breaks on it thunders with Athena's voice ; nay, whenever you throw your window wide open in the morning, you let in Athena, as wisdom and fresh air at the same instant ; and whenever you draw a pure, long, full breath of right heaven, you take Athena into your heart, through your blood, and with the blood, into the thoughts of your brain.

Now this giving of strength by the air, observe, is mechanical as well as chemical.⁵ You cannot strike a good blow but with your chest full ; and in hand-to-hand fighting, it is not the muscle that fails first, it is the breath ; the longest-breathed will, on the average, be the victor,—not the strongest. Note how Shakespeare always leans on this. Of Mortimer, in "changing hardiment with great Glendower" :⁶

Three times they breathed, and three times did they drink,
Upon agreement, of swift Severn's flood.

And again, Hotspur sending challenge to Prince Harry :

That none might draw short breath to-day
But I and Harry Monmouth.

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

Again of Hamlet, before he received his wound :

He's fat and scant of breath.

Again, Orlando in the wrestling :

Yes ; I beseech your grace
I am not yet well breathed.

Now of all people that ever lived, the Greeks knew best what breath meant, both in exercise and in battle ; and therefore the queen of the air becomes to them at once the queen of bodily strength in war ; not mere brutal muscular strength,—that belongs to Ares,—but the strength of young lives passed in pure air and swift exercise,—Camilla's virginal force, that “ flies o'er the unbending corn, and skims along the main.” . . .

Secondly, Athena is the air giving vegetative impulse to the earth. She is the wind and the rain—and yet more the pure air itself, getting at the earth fresh-turned by spade or plough—and, above all, feeding the fresh leaves ; for though the Greeks knew nothing about carbonic acid, they did know that trees feed on the air.

Now, note first in this, the myth of the air getting at ploughed ground. You know I told you the lord of all labour by which man lived was Hephæstus ; therefore Athena adopts a child of his and of the earth, Erichthonius,—literally, “ the tearer up of the ground ”—who is the head (though not in the direct line) of the kings of Attica ; and having adopted him, she gives him to be brought up by the three nymphs of the dew. Of these, Aglauros, the dweller in the fields, is the envy or malice of the earth ; she answers nearly to the envy of Cain, the tiller of the ground, against his shepherd brother, in her own envy against her two sisters—Herse, the cloud dew, who is the beloved of the shepherd Mercury ; and Pandrosos, the diffused dew, or dew of heaven. . . .

Thirdly, Athena is the air in its power over the sea. On the earliest Panathenaic vase known—the “ Burgon ” vase in the British Museum—Athena has a dolphin on her shield. The dolphin has two principal meanings in Greek symbolism.

THE AIR WE BREATHE

It means, first, the sea; secondarily, the ascending and descending course of any of the heavenly bodies from one sea-horizon to another—the dolphins' arching rise and replunge (in a summer evening, out of calm sea, their black backs roll round with exactly the slow motion of a water-wheel; but I do not know how far Aristotle's exaggerated account of their leaping or their swiftness has any foundation) being taken as a type of the emergence of the sun or stars from the sea in the east, and plunging beneath in the west. Hence, Apollo, when in his personal power he crosses the sea, leading his Cretan colonists to Pytho, takes the form of a dolphin, becomes Apollo Delphinus, and names the founded colony "Delphi." . . . Then, this idea of career upon, or conquest of, the sea, either by the creatures themselves, or by dolphin-like ships (compare the Merlin prophecy—⁷

They shall ride
Over ocean wide
With hempen bridle and horse of tree,)

connects itself with the thought of undulation, and of the wave-power of the sea itself, which is always expressed by the serpentine bodies either of the sea-gods or of the sea-horse; and when Athena carries, as she does often in later work, a serpent for her shield-sign, it is not so much the repetition of her own ægis-snakes as the farther expression of her power over the sea-wave. . . .

Fourthly, Athena is the air nourishing artificial light—unconsuming fire. Therefore, a lamp was always kept burning in the Erechtheum;⁸ and the torch-race belongs chiefly to her festival, of which the meaning is to show the danger of the perishing of the light even by excess of the air that nourishes it: and so that the race is not to the swift, but to the wise. The household use of her constant light is symbolized in the lovely passage in the *Odyssey*, where Ulysses and his son move the armour while the servants are shut in their chambers, and there is no one to hold the torches for them; but Athena herself,

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

"having a golden lamp," fills all the rooms with light. Her presence in war-strength with her favourite heroes is always shown by the "unwearied" fire hovering on their helmets and shields; and the image gradually becomes constant and accepted, both for the maintenance of household watchfulness, as in the parable of the ten virgins, or as the symbol of direct inspiration, in the rushing wind and divided flames of Pentecost. But, together with this thought of unconsuming and constant fire, there is always mingled in the Greek mind the sense of the consuming by excess, as of the flame by the air, so also of the inspired creature by its own fire (thus, again, "the zeal of Thine house hath eaten me up,"⁹ "my zeal hath consumed me, because of thine enemies," and the like); and especially Athena has this aspect toward the truly sensual and bodily strength. . . .

Lastly, Athena is the air conveying vibration of sound. In all the loveliest representations in central Greek art of the birth of Athena, Apollo¹⁰ stands close to the sitting Jupiter, singing with a deep, quiet joyfulness, to his lyre. The sun is always thought of as the master of time and rhythm, and as the origin of the composing and inventive discovery of melody; but the air, as the actual element and substance of the voice, the prolonging and sustaining power of it, and the symbol of its moral passion. Whatever in music is measured and designed, belongs therefore to Apollo and the Muses; whatever is impulsive and passionate, to Athena: hence her constant strength of voice or cry (as when she aids the shout of Achilles) curiously opposed to the dumbness of Demeter. The Apolline lyre, therefore, is not so much the instrument producing sound, as its measurer and divider by length or tension of string into given notes; and I believe it is, in a double connection with its office as a measurer of time or motion, and its relation to the transit of the sun in the sky, that Hermes¹¹ forms it from the tortoise-shell, which is the image of the dappled concave of the cloudy sky. Thenceforward all the limiting or restraining modes of music belong to the Muses; but the passionate music is wind music, as in

THE AIR WE BREATHE

the Doric flute. Then, when this inspired music becomes degraded in its passion, it sinks into the pipe of Pan, and the double pipe of Marsyas, and is then rejected by Athena. The myth which represents her doing so is that she invented THE double pipe from hearing the hiss of the Gorgonian serpents ;¹² but when she played upon it, chancing to see her face reflected in water, she saw that it was distorted, whereupon she threw down the flute, which Marsyas found. Then, the strife of Apollo and Marsyas represents the enduring contest between music in which the words and thought lead, and the lyre measures or melodizes them (which Pindar means when he calls his hymns " kings over the lyre "), and music in which the words are lost, and the wind or impulse leads,—generally, therefore, between intellectual, and brutal, or meaningless, music. Therefore, when Apollo prevails, he slays Marsyas, taking the limit and external bond of his shape from him, which is death, without touching the mere muscular strength ; yet shameful and dreadful in dissolution.

And the opposition of these two kinds of sound is continually dwelt upon by the Greek philosophers, the real fact at the root of all their teaching being this : that true music is the natural expression of a lofty passion for a right cause ; that in proportion to the kingliness and force of any personality, the expression either of its joy or suffering becomes measured, chastened, calm, and capable of interpretation only by the majesty of ordered, beautiful, and worded sound. Exactly in proportion to the degree in which we become narrow in the cause and conception of our passions, incontinent in the utterance of them, feeble of perseverance in them, sullied or shameful in the indulgence of them, their expression by musical sound becomes broken, mean, fatuous, and at last impossible ; the measured waves of the air of heaven will not lend themselves to expression of ultimate vice, it must be for ever sunk into discordance or silence. And since, as before stated, every work of right art has a tendency to reproduce the ethical state which first developed it, this, which of all arts is most directly ethical in origin, is also the most

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

direct in power of discipline, the first, the simplest, the most effective of all instruments of moral instruction ; while in the failure and betrayal of its functions, it becomes the subtlest aid of moral degradation.

Queen of the Air, Lect. I

I have felt

A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts ; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man :
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things.

WORDSWORTH, *Tintern Abbey*

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. What do you know of the legends of (a) Hercules ; (b) Neptune ; (c) Apollo ; (d) Minerva ?
2. Find out the connexion between St George and the Dragon and St George for England.
3. Make drawings of four allegorical figures representing Prudence, Justice, Fortitude, Temperance.
4. Write a description of *one* of the " agencies of this great goddess Athena," also an experiment to illustrate it.
5. Write short notes on interesting aspects of (a) dolphins ; (b) unconsuming fire ; (c) the symbolism of perpetually burning lamps ; (d) the lyre and the flute.
6. What is the difference between a musical sound and a noise ? Name some of the instances of Nature's music.

TRUE RICHES : ATHENA IN THE HEART

I HAVE . . . a few words to say, bearing on what seems to me present need, respecting the function of Athena conceived as the directress of human passion, resolution, and labour—few words, for I am not yet prepared to give accurate distinction between the intellectual rule of Athena and that of the

TRUE RICHES

Muses ; but broadly, the Muses with their King ¹ preside over meditative, historical and poetic arts, whose end is the discovery of light or truth, and the creation of beauty : but Athena rules over moral passion, and practically useful art. She does not make men learned, but prudent and subtle : she does not teach them to make their work beautiful, but to make it right. . . .

The faults of a work of art are the faults of its workman, and its virtues his virtues. . . .

Great art is the expression of the mind of a great man, and mean art, that of the want of mind of a weak man. A foolish person builds foolishly, and a wise one, sensibly ; a virtuous one, beautifully ; and a vicious one, basely. If stonework is well put together, it means that a thoughtful man planned it, and a careful man cut it, and an honest man cemented it. If it has too much ornament, it means that its carver was too greedy of pleasure ; if too little, that he was rude, or insensitive, or stupid, and the like. So that when once you have learned how to spell these most precious of all legends,—pictures and buildings,²—you may read the characters of men, and of nations, in their art, as in a mirror ;—nay, as in a microscope, and magnified a hundredfold ; for the character becomes passionate in the art, and intensifies itself in all its noblest or meanest delights. Nay, not only as in a microscope, but as under a scalpel, and in dissection ; for a man may hide himself from you, or misrepresent himself to you, every other way ; but he cannot in his work : there, be sure, you have him to the inmost. All that he likes, all that he sees,—all that he can do,—his imagination, his affections, his perseverance, his impatience, his clumsiness, cleverness, everything is there. If the work is a cobweb, you know it was made by a spider ; if a honeycomb, by a bee ; a worm-cast is thrown up by a worm, and a nest wreathed by a bird ; and a house built by a man, worthily if he is worthy, and ignobly if he is ignoble. And always, from the least to the greatest, as the made thing is good or bad, so is the maker of it. . . .

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

The foundation of art in moral character: Of course art-gift and amiability of disposition are two different things ; a good man is not necessarily a painter, nor does an eye for colour necessarily imply an honest mind. But great art implies the union of both powers : it is the expression, by an art-gift, of a pure soul. If the gift is not there, we can have no art at all ; and if the soul—and a right soul too—is not there, the art is bad, however dexterous.

But also remember that the art-gift itself is only the result of the moral character of generations. A bad woman may have a sweet voice ; but that sweetness of voice comes of the past morality of her race. That she can sing with it at all, she owes to the determination of laws of music by the morality of the past. Every act, every impulse, of virtue and vice, affects in any creature, face, voice, nervous power, and vigour and harmony of invention, at once. Perseverance in rightness of human conduct, renders, after a certain number of generations, human art possible ; every sin clouds it, be it ever so little a one ; and persistent vicious living and following of pleasure render, after a certain number of generations, all art impossible. Men are deceived by the long-suffering of the laws of nature ; and mistake, in a nation, the reward of the virtue of its sires for the issue of its own sins. . . .

The foundation of morals and art is in war.³ The reason of this too-manifest fact is, that, until now, it has been impossible for any nation, except a warrior one, to fix its mind wholly on its men, instead of on their possessions. Every great soldier nation thinks, necessarily, first of multiplying its bodies and souls of men, in good temper and strict discipline. As long as this is its political aim, it does not matter what it temporarily suffers or loses, either in numbers or in wealth ; its morality and its arts (if it have national art-gift) advance together ; but so soon as it ceases to be a warrior nation, it thinks of its possessions instead of its men ; and then the moral and poetic powers vanish together.

It is thus, however, absolutely necessary to the virtue of war that it should be waged by personal strength, not by

TRUE RICHES

money or machinery. A nation that fights with a mercenary force, or with torpedoes instead of its own arms, is dying. Not but that there is more true courage in modern than even in ancient war : but this is, first, because all the remaining life of European nations is with a morbid intensity thrown into their soldiers ; and, secondly, because their present heroism is the culmination of centuries of inbred and traditional valour, which Athens taught them by forcing them to govern the foam of the sea-wave and of the horse—not the steam of kettles.

And farther, note this, which is vital to us in the present crisis : If war is to be made by money and machinery, the nation which is the largest and most covetous multitude will win. You may be as scientific as you choose ; the mob that can pay more for sulphuric acid and gunpowder will at last poison its bullets, throw acid in your faces, and make an end of you ; —of itself, also, in good time, but of you first. And to the English people the choice of its fate is very near now.* It may spasmodically defend its property with iron walls a fathom thick, a few years longer—a very few. No walls will defend either it, or its havings, against the multitude that is breeding and spreading, faster than the clouds, over the habitable earth. We shall be allowed to live by small pedlar's business, and ironmongery ⁴—since we have chosen those for our line of life—as long as we are found useful black servants to the Americans ; and are content to dig coals and sit in the cinders ; and have still coals to dig,—they once exhausted, or got cheaper elsewhere, we shall be abolished. But if we think more wisely, while there is yet time, and set our minds again on multiplying Englishmen, and not on cheapening English wares ; if we resolve to submit to wholesome laws of labour and economy,⁵ and setting our political squabbles aside, try how many strong creatures, friendly and faithful to each other, we can crowd into every spot of English dominion, neither poison nor iron will prevail against us ; nor traffic—nor hatred : the noble nation will yet, by the

* Written in 1869.

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

grace of Heaven, rule over the ignoble, and force of heart hold its own against fire-balls.

But there is yet a further reason for the dependence of the arts on war. The vice and injustice of the world are constantly springing up anew, and are only to be subdued by battle ; the keepers of order and law must always be soldiers. And now, going back to the myth of Athena, we see that though she is first a warrior maid, she detests war for its own sake ; she arms Achilles and Ulysses in just quarrels, but she *disarms* Ares. She contends, herself, continually against disorder and convulsion, in the earth giants ; she stands by Hercules' side in victory over all monstrous evil : in justice only she judges and makes war. But in this war of hers she is wholly implacable. She has little notion of converting criminals. There is no faculty of mercy in her when she has been resisted. Her word is only, " I will mock when your fear cometh."⁶ Note the words that follow ; " when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction as a whirlwind " ; for her wrath is of irresistible tempest : once roused, it is blind and deaf,—rabies—madness of anger—darkness of the *Dies Irae*.⁷

And that is, indeed, the sorrowfullest fact we have to know about our several lives. Wisdom never forgives. Whatever resistance we have offered to her law, she avenges for ever ; the lost hour can never be redeemed, and the accomplished wrong never atoned for. The best that can be done afterward, but for that, had been better ;—the falsest of all the cries of peace, where there is no peace, is that of the pardon of sin, as the mob expect it. Wisdom can " put away " sin, but she cannot pardon it ; and she is apt, in her haste, to put away the sinner as well, when the black ægis is on her breast.

And this is also a fact we have to know about our national life, that it is ended as soon as it has lost the power of noble anger. When it paints over, and apologizes for its pitiful criminalities ; and endures its false weights and its adulterated food ;—dares not decide practically between good and evil, and can neither honour the one, nor smite the other,

TRUE RICHES

but sneers at the good, as if it were hidden evil, and consoles the evil with pious sympathy and conserves it in the sugar of its leaden heart,—the end is come. The first sign, then, of Athena's presence with any people, is that they become warriors, and that the chief thought of every man of them is to stand rightly in his rank, and not fail from his brother's side in battle. Wealth, and pleasure, and even love, are all, under Athena's orders, sacrificed to this duty of standing fast in the rank of war.

But further : Athena presides over industry, as well as battle ; typically, over women's industry ; that brings comfort with pleasantness. Her word to us all is : " Be well exercised, and rightly clothed. Clothed, and in your right minds ; not insane and in rags, nor in soiled fine clothes clutched from each others' shoulders. Fight and weave. Then I myself will answer for the course of the lance and the colours of the loom." . . .

⁸It is not political economy to put a number of strong men down on an acre of ground, with no lodging, and nothing to eat. Nor is it political economy to build a city on good ground, and fill it with a store of corn and treasure, and put a score of lepers to live in it. Political economy creates together the means of life, and the living persons who are to use them ; and of both, the best and the most that it can, but imperatively the best, not the most. A few good and healthy men, rather than a multitude of diseased rogues ; and a little real milk and wine rather than much chalk and petroleum ; but the gist of the whole business is that the men and their property must both be produced together,—not one to the loss of the other. Property must not be created in lands desolate by exile of their people, nor multiplied and depraved humanity, in lands barren of bread.

Nevertheless, though the men and their possessions are to be increased at the same time, the first object of thought is always to be the multiplication of a worthy people. The strength of the nation is in its multitude, not in its territory, but only in its sound multitude. It is one thing, both in a

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

man and a nation, to gain flesh, and another to be swollen with putrid humour. Not that multitude ever ought to be inconsistent with virtue. Two men should be wiser than one, and two thousand than two ; nor do I know another so gross fallacy in the records of human stupidity as that excuse for neglect of crime by greatness of cities. As if the first purpose of congregation were not to devise laws and repress crimes ! as if bees and wasps could live honestly in flocks ; men, only in separate dens !—as if it were easy to help one another on the opposite sides of a mountain, and impossible on the opposite sides of a street ! But when the men are true and good, and stand shoulder to shoulder, the strength of any nation is in its quantity of life, not in its land nor gold. The more good men a state has, in proportion to its territory, the stronger the state. And as it has been the madness of economists to seek for gold instead of life, so it has been the madness of kings to seek for land instead of life. They want the town on the other side of the river, and seek it at the spear point : it never enters their stupid heads that to double the honest souls in the town on *this* side of the river, would make them stronger kings ; and that this doubling might be done by the ploughshare instead of the spear, and through happiness instead of misery.

Therefore, in brief, this is the object of all true policy and true economy : “ utmost multitude of good men on every given space of ground ”—imperatively always, good, sound, honest men, not a mob of white-faced thieves. So that, on the one hand, all aristocracy is wrong which is inconsistent with numbers ; and on the other all numbers are wrong which are inconsistent with breeding.

Then, touching the accumulation of wealth for the maintenance of such men, observe, that you must never use the terms “ money ” and “ wealth ” as synonymous. Wealth consists of the good, and therefore useful, things in the possession of the nation : money is only the written or coined sign of the relative quantities of wealth in each person’s possession. All money is a divisible title-deed, of immense import-

TRUE RICHES

ance as an expression of right to property ; but absolutely valueless, as property itself. Thus, supposing a nation isolated from all others, the money in its possession is, at its maximum value, worth all the property of the nation, and no more, because no more can be got for it. And the money of all nations is worth at its maximum, the property of all nations, and no more,⁹ for no more can be got for it. Thus, every article of property produced increases, by its value, the value of all the money in the world, and every article of property destroyed, diminishes the value of all the money in the world. If ten men are cast away on a rock, with a thousand pounds in their pockets, and there is on the rock neither food nor shelter, their money is worth simply nothing ; for nothing is to be had for it : if they build ten huts, and recover a cask of biscuit from the wreck, then this thousand pounds, at its maximum value, is worth ten huts and a cask of biscuit. If they make their thousand pounds into two thousand by writing new notes, their two thousand pounds are still only worth ten huts and a cask of biscuit. And the law of relative value is the same for all the world, and all the people in it, and all their property, as for ten men on a rock. Therefore, money is truly and finally lost in the degree in which its value is taken from it (ceasing in that degree to be money at all) : and it is truly gained in the degree in which value is added to it. Thus, suppose the money coined by the nation to be a fixed sum, divided very minutely (say into francs and cents), and neither to be added to, nor diminished. Then every grain of food and inch of lodging added to its possessions makes every cent in its pockets worth proportionally more, and every grain of food it consumes, and inch of roof it allows to fall to ruin, makes every cent in its pockets worth less ; and this with mathematical precision. The immediate value of the money at particular times and places depends, indeed, on the humours of the possessors of property ; but the nation is in the one case gradually getting richer ; and will feel the pressure of poverty steadily everywhere relaxing, whatever the humours of individuals may be ; and, in the other case,

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

is gradually growing poorer, and the pressure of its poverty will every day tell more and more, in ways that it cannot explain, but will most bitterly feel.

The actual quantity of money which it coins in relation to its real property, is therefore only of consequence for convenience of exchange ; but the proportion in which this quantity of money is divided among individuals expresses their various rights to greater or less proportions of the national property, and must not, therefore, be tampered with. The Government may at any time, with perfect justice, double its issue of coinage, if it gives every man who had ten pounds in his pocket, another ten pounds, and every man who had ten pence, another ten pence ; for it thus does not make any of them richer ; it merely divides their counters for them into twice the number. But if it gives the newly-issued coins to other people, or keeps them itself, it simply robs the former holders to precisely that extent. This most important function of money, as a title-deed, on the non-violation of which all national soundness of commerce and peace of life depend, has been never rightly distinguished by economists from the quite unimportant function of money as a means of exchange. You can exchange goods,—at some inconvenience indeed, but still you can contrive to do it,—without money at all ; but you cannot maintain your claim to the savings of your past life without a document declaring the amount of them, which the nation and its Government will respect.

¹⁰And as economists have lost sight of this great function of money in relation to individual rights, so they have equally lost sight of its function as a representative of good things. That, for every good thing produced, so much money is put into everybody's pocket—is the one simple and primal truth for the public to know, and for economists to teach. How many of them have taught it ? Some have ; but only incidentally ; and others will say it is a truism. If it be, do the public know it ? Does your ordinary English householder know that every costly dinner he gives has destroyed for ever as much money as it is worth ? Does every well-educated

TRUE RICHES

girl—do even the women in high political position—know that every fine dress they wear themselves, or cause to be worn, destroys precisely so much of the national money as the labour and material of it are worth? If this be a truism, it is one that needs proclaiming somewhat louder.

That, then, is the relation of money and goods. So much goods, so much money; so little goods, so little money. But as there is this true relation between money and “goods,” or good things, so there is a false relation between money and “bads,” or bad things. Many bad things will fetch a price in exchange; but they do not increase the wealth of the country. Good wine is wealth—drugged wine is not; good meat is wealth—putrid meat is not; good pictures are wealth—bad pictures are not. A thing is worth precisely what it can do for you; not what you choose to pay for it. You may pay a thousand pounds for a cracked pipkin, if you please; but you do not by that transaction make the cracked pipkin worth one that will hold water, nor that, nor any pipkin whatsoever, worth more than it was before you paid such sum for it. You may, perhaps, induce many potters to manufacture fissured pots, and many amateurs of clay to buy them; but the nation is, through the whole business so encouraged, rich by the addition to its wealth of so many potsherds—and there an end. The thing is worth what it CAN do for you, not what you think it can; and most national luxuries, nowadays, are a form of potsherd, provided for the solace of a self-complacent Job, voluntarily sedent on his ash-heap.

And, also, so far as good things already exist, and have become media of exchange, the variations in their prices are absolutely indifferent to the nation. Whether Mr A. buys a Titian from Mr B. for twenty, or for two thousand, pounds, matters not sixpence to the national revenue: that is to say, it matters in no wise to the revenue whether Mr A. has the picture and Mr B. the money, or Mr B. the picture and Mr A. the money. Which of them will spend the money most wisely, and which of them will keep the picture most

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

carefully, is, indeed, a matter of some importance ; but this cannot be known by the mere fact of exchange.

The wealth of a nation then, first, and its peace and well-being besides, depend on the number of persons it can employ in making good and useful things. I say its well-being also, for the character of men depends more on their occupations than on any teaching we can give them, or principles with which we can imbue them. The employment forms the habits of body and mind, and these are the constitution of the man ; —the greater part of his moral or persistent nature ; whatever effort, under special excitement, he may make to change, or overcome them. Employment is the half, and the primal half, of education—it is the warp of it ;¹¹ and the fineness or the endurance of all subsequently woven pattern depends wholly on its straightness and strength. And, whatever difficulty there may be in tracing through past history the remoter connections of event and cause, one chain of sequence is always clear : the formation, namely, of the character of nations by their employments, and the determination of their final fate by their character. The moment, and the first direction of decisive revolutions, often depend on accident ; but their persistent course, and their consequences, depend wholly on the nature of the people. The passing of the Reform Bill by the late English Parliament* may have been more or less accidental : the results of the measure now rest on the character of the English people, as it has been developed by their recent interests, occupations, and habits of life. Whether, as a body, they employ their new powers for good or evil, will depend, not on their facilities of knowledge, nor even on the general intelligence they may possess ; but on the number of persons among them whom wholesome employments have rendered familiar with the duties, and modest in their estimate of the promises, of Life.

But especially in framing laws respecting the treatment or employment of improvident and more or less vicious persons, it is to be remembered that as men are not made heroes by

* Disraeli's Reform Bill, 1867.

TRUE RICHES

the performance of an act of heroism, but must be brave before they can perform it, so they are not made villains by the commission of a crime, but were villains before they committed it ; and that the right of public interference with their conduct begins when they begin to corrupt themselves ;—not merely at the moment when they have proved themselves hopelessly corrupt. . . .

The general principles by which employment should be regulated may be briefly stated as follows :

I. ¹²There being three great classes of mechanical powers at our disposal, namely, (a) vital or muscular power ; (b) natural mechanical power of wind, water, and electricity ; and (c) artificially produced mechanical power ; it is the first principle of economy to use all available vital power first, then the inexpensive natural forces, and only at last to have recourse to artificial power. And this, because it is always better for a man to work with his own hands to feed and clothe himself, than to stand idle while a machine works for him ; and if he cannot, by all the labour healthily possible to him, feed and clothe himself, then it is better to use an inexpensive machine—as a windmill or watermill—than a costly one like a steam-engine, so long as we have natural force enough at our disposal. Whereas at present we continually hear economists regret that the water-powers of the cascades or streams of a country should be lost, but hardly ever that the muscular power of its idle inhabitants should be lost ; and again, we see vast districts, as the South of Provence, where a strong wind blows steadily all day long for six days out of seven throughout the year, without a windmill, while men are continually employed a hundred miles to the north, in digging fuel to obtain artificial power.

But the principal point of all to be kept in view is, that in every idle arm and shoulder throughout the country there is a certain quantity of force, equivalent to the force of so much fuel ; and that it is mere insane waste to dig for coal for our force, while the vital force is unused ; and not only unused, but in being so, corrupting and polluting itself. We waste our

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

coal and spoil our humanity at one and the same instant. Therefore, wherever there is an idle arm, always save coal with it, and the stores of England will last all the longer. And precisely the same argument answers the common one about "taking employment out of the hands of the industrious labourer." Why, what is "employment" but the putting out of vital force instead of mechanical force? We are continually in search of means of strength,—to pull, to hammer, to fetch, to carry; we waste our future resources to get this strength, while we leave all the living fuel to burn itself out in mere pestiferous breath, and production of its variously noisome form of ashes! Clearly, if we want fire for force, we want men for force first. The industrious hands must already have so much to do that they can do no more, or else we need not use machines to help them. Then use the idle hands first. Instead of dragging petroleum with a steam-engine, put it on a canal and drag it with human arms and shoulders. Petroleum cannot possibly be in a hurry to arrive anywhere. We can always order that, and many other things, time enough before we want it. So, the carriage of everything which does not spoil by keeping may most wholesomely and safely be done by water-traction and sailing vessels; and no healthier work can men be put to, nor better discipline, than such active portorage. . . .

The third great principle of employment is, that whenever there is pressure of poverty to be met, all enforced occupation should be directed to the production of useful articles only, that is to say, of food, simple clothing, of lodging, or of the means of conveying, distributing, and preserving these. It is yet little understood by economists, and not at all by the public, that the employment of persons in a useless business cannot relieve ultimate distress. The money given to employ riband-makers at Coventry is merely so much money withdrawn from what would have employed lace-makers at Honiton: or makers of something else, as useless, elsewhere. We *must* spend our money in some way, at some time, and it cannot at any time be spent without employing somebody.

TRUE RICHES

If we gamble it away, the person who wins it must spend it ; if we lose it in a railroad speculation, it has gone into some one else's pockets, or merely gone to pay navvies for making a useless embankment, instead of to pay riband- or button-makers for making useless ribands or buttons ; we cannot lose it (unless by actually destroying it) without giving employment of some kind ; and therefore, whatever quantity of money exists, the relative quantity of employment must some day come out of it ; but the distress of the nation signifies that the employments given have produced nothing that will support its existence. Men cannot live on ribands, or buttons, or velvet, or by going quickly from place to place ; and every coin spent in useless ornament, or useless motion, is so much withdrawn from the national means of life. One of the most beautiful uses of railroads is to enable *A* to travel from the town of *X* to take away the business of *B* in the town of *Y* ; while, in the meantime, *B* travels from the town of *Y* to take away *A*'s business in the town of *X*. But the national wealth is not increased by these operations. Whereas every coin spent in cultivating ground, in repairing lodging, in making necessary and good roads, in preventing danger by sea or land, and in carriage of food or fuel where they are required, is so much absolute and direct gain to the whole nation. To cultivate land round Coventry makes living easier at Honiton, and every acre of sand gained from the sea in Lincolnshire, makes life easier all over England.

Lastly. Since for every idle person, some one else must be working somewhere to provide him with clothes and food, and doing, therefore, double the quantity of work that would be enough for his own needs, it is only a matter of pure justice to compel the idle person to work for his maintenance himself. The conscription has been used in many countries, to take away labourers who supported their families, from their useful work, and maintain them for purposes chiefly of military display at the public expense. Since this has been long endured by the most civilized nations, let it not be thought that they would not much more gladly endure a conscription

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

which should seize only the vicious and the idle, already living by criminal procedures at the public expense ; and which should discipline and educate them to labour which would not only maintain themselves, but be serviceable to the commonwealth. The question is simply this :—we *must* feed the drunkard, vagabond, and thief ;—but shall we do so by letting them steal their food, and do no work for it ? or shall we give them their food in appointed quantity, and enforce their doing work which shall be worth it ? and which in process of time will redeem their own characters, and make them happy and serviceable members of society ?

Queen of the Air, Lect. III

Who thinks he has sufficiency
Of goodés has no indigence
Though he have neither land nor rent,
Great might, nor high magnificence.
He has enough that is content.

Who had all riches unto Inde
And were not satisfied in minde
With poverty I hold him schent : *
Of covetise such is the kind.
He has enough that is content.

Therefore I pray you, brother dear,
Not to delight in dainties sere ; †
Thank God for what is to thee sent ;
And of it gladly make good cheere.
He has enough that is content.

W. DUNBAR (15th cent.)

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. Make a list of " meditative, historical and poetic arts," over which Ruskin suggests that the Muses with their King preside, and a list of things belonging to " practically useful art."
2. Name some of the historic industries peculiarly belonging to women.
3. Write a few paragraphs to show that you understand that

* Schent = ruined.

† Sere = strange.

TRUE RICHES

money is not necessarily wealth, and that often wealth is not money.

4. Since making things is a most delightful form of activity, suggest six handicrafts that would produce "good and useful things," and also happily develop the character of the worker.

5. What nations or communities in the past have been famous for their productions with the (a) potter's wheel; (b) loom; (c) spinning-wheel; (d) hammer; (e) chisel; (f) blow-pipe?

6. Find out something interesting about the old industries of the British Isles and where they were carried on. Which of these have disappeared and which have become much greater?

FROM "UNTO THIS LAST"

[Four essays "On the First Principles of Political Economy," were contributed by Ruskin to the "Cornhill Magazine" in 1860. In them the writer anticipated the ideas and convictions which only now are becoming general, and so unpopular were they with the reading public that the editor declined to continue their publication.]

The extracts here given are from the first two essays.]

THE ROOTS OF HONOUR

I BELIEVE the sudden and extensive inequalities of demand which necessarily arise in the mercantile operations of an active nation, constitute the only essential difficulty which has to be overcome in a just organization of labour. . . . The following general facts bearing on it may be noted.

The wages which enable any workman to live are necessarily higher, if his work is liable to intermission, than if it is assured and continuous ; and however severe the struggle for work may become, the general law will always hold, that men must get more daily pay if, on the average, they can only calculate on work three days a week, than they would require if they were sure of work six days a week. Supposing that a man cannot live on less than a shilling a day, his seven shillings he must get, either for three days' violent work, or six days' deliberate work. The tendency of all modern mercantile operations is to throw both wages and trade into the form of a lottery, and to make the workman's pay depend on intermittent exertion and the principal's profit on dexterously used chance.

In what partial degree, I repeat, this may be necessary, in consequence of the activities of modern trade, I do not here investigate ; contenting myself with the fact, that in its fatallest aspects it is assuredly unnecessary, and results merely from love of gambling on the part of the masters, and from

THE ROOTS OF HONOUR

ignorance and sensuality in the men. The masters cannot bear to let any opportunity of gain escape them, and frantically rush at every gap and breach in the walls of Fortune, raging to be rich, and affronting, with impatient covetousness, every risk of ruin ; while the men prefer three days of violent labour, and three days of drunkenness, to six days of moderate work and wise rest. There is no way in which a principal, who really desires to help his workmen, may do it more effectually than by checking these disorderly habits both in himself and them ; keeping his own business operations on a scale which will enable him to pursue them securely, not yielding to temptations of precarious gain ; and, at the same time, leading his workmen into regular habits of labour and life, either by inducing them rather to take low wages in the form of a fixed salary, than high wages, subject to the chance of their being thrown out of work ; or, if this be impossible, by discouraging the system of violent exertion for nominally high day wages, and leading the men to take lower pay for more regular labour.

In effecting any radical changes of this kind, doubtless there would be great inconvenience and loss incurred by all the originators of movement. That which can be done with perfect convenience and without loss, is not always the thing that most needs to be done, or which we are most imperatively required to do.

I have already alluded to the difference hitherto existing between regiments of men associated for purposes of violence, and for purposes of manufacture ; in that the former appear capable of self-sacrifice—the latter, not ; which singular fact is the real reason of the general lowness of estimate in which the profession of commerce is held, as compared with that of arms. Philosophically, it does not, at first sight, appear reasonable (many writers have endeavoured to prove it unreasonable) that a peaceable and rational person, whose trade is buying and selling, should be held in less honour than an unpeaceable and often irrational person, whose trade is slaying. Nevertheless, the consent of mankind has always,

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

in spite of the philosophers, given precedence to the soldier.

And this is right.

For the soldier's trade, verily and essentially, is not slaying, but being slain. This, without well knowing its own meaning, the world honours it for. A bravo's trade is slaying ; but the world has never respected bravos more than merchants : the reason it honours the soldier is, because he holds his life at the service of the State. Reckless he may be—fond of pleasure or of adventure—all kinds of bye-motives and mean impulses may have determined the choice of his profession, and may effect (to all appearance exclusively) his daily conduct in it ; but our estimate of him is based on this ultimate fact—of which we are well assured—that, put him in a fortress breach, with all the pleasures of the world behind him, and only death and his duty in front of him, he will keep his face to the front ; and he knows that this choice may be put to him at any moment, and has beforehand taken his part—virtually takes such part continually—does, in reality, die daily.

Not less is the respect we pay to the lawyer and physician, founded ultimately on their self-sacrifice. Whatever the learning or acuteness of a great lawyer, our chief respect for him depends on our belief that, set in a judge's seat, he will strive to judge justly, come of it what may. Could we suppose that he would take bribes, and use his acuteness and legal knowledge to give plausibility to iniquitous decisions, no degree of intellect would win for him our respect. Nothing will win it, short of our tacit conviction, that in all important acts of his life justice is first with him ; his own interest, second.

In the case of a physician, the ground of the honour we render him is clearer still. Whatever his science, we should shrink from him in horror if we found him regard his patients merely as subjects to experiment upon ; much more, if we found that, receiving bribes from persons interested in their deaths, he was using his best skill to give poison in the mask of medicine.

THE ROOTS OF HONOUR

Finally, the principle holds with utmost clearness as it respects clergymen. No goodness of disposition will excuse want of science in a physician or of shrewdness in an advocate ; but a clergyman, even though his power of intellect be small, is respected on the presumed ground of his unselfishness and serviceableness.

Now there can be no question but that the tact, foresight, decision, and other mental powers, required for the successful management of a large mercantile concern, if not such as could be compared with those of a great lawyer, general, or divine, would at least match the general conditions of mind required in the subordinate officers of a ship, or of a regiment, or in the curate of a country parish. If, therefore, all the efficient members of the so-called liberal professions are still, somehow, in public estimate of honour, preferred before the head of a commercial firm, the reason must lie deeper than in the measurement of their several powers of mind.

And the essential reason for such preference will be found to lie in the fact that the merchant is presumed to act always selfishly. His work may be very necessary to the community ; but the motive of it is understood to be wholly personal. The merchant's first object in all his dealings must be (the public believe) to get as much for himself, and leave as little to his neighbour (or customer) as possible. Enforcing this upon him, by political statute, as the necessary principle of his action ; recommending it to him on all occasions, and themselves reciprocally adopting it ; proclaiming vociferously, for law of the universe, that a buyer's function is to cheapen, and a seller's to cheat,—the public, nevertheless, involuntarily condemn the man of commerce for his compliance with their own statement, and stamp him for ever as belonging to an inferior grade of human personality.

This they will find, eventually, they must give up doing. They must not cease to condemn selfishness ; but they will have to discover a kind of commerce which is not exclusively selfish. Or, rather, they will have to discover that there never was, or can be, any other kind of commerce ; that this which

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

they have called commerce was not commerce at all, but cozening ; and that a true merchant differs as much from a merchant according to laws of modern political economy, as the hero of *The Excursion* from Autolycus. They will find that commerce is an occupation which gentlemen will every day see more need to engage in, rather than in the businesses of talking to men, or slaying them : that, in true commerce, as in true preaching, or true fighting, it is necessary to admit the idea of occasional voluntary loss ;—that sixpences have to be lost, as well as lives, under a sense of duty ; that the market may have its martyrdoms as well as the pulpit ; and trade its heroisms, as well as war.

May have—in the final issue, must have—and only has not had yet, because men of heroic temper have always been misguided in their youth into other fields, not recognizing what is in our days, perhaps, the most important of all fields ; so that, while many a zealous person loses his life in trying to teach the form of a gospel, very few will lose a hundred pounds in showing the practice of one.

The fact is, that people never have had clearly explained to them the true functions of a merchant with respect to other people. I should like the reader to be very clear about this.

Five great intellectual professions, relating to daily necessities of life, have hitherto existed—three exist necessarily, in every civilized nation :

The Soldier's profession is to *defend* it.

The Pastor's, to *teach* it.

The Physician's, to *keep it in health*.

The Lawyer's, to *enforce justice* in it.

The Merchant's, to *provide* for it.

And the duty of all these men is, on due occasion, to *die* for it.

“ On due occasion,” namely :

The Soldier, rather than leave his post in battle.

The Physician, rather than leave his post in plague.

THE ROOTS OF HONOUR

The Pastor, rather than teach Falsehood.

The Lawyer, rather than countenance Injustice.

The Merchant—What is *his* "due occasion" of death?

It is the main question for the merchant, as for all of us. For, truly, the man who does not know when to die, does not know how to live.

Observe, the merchant's function (or manufacturer's, for in the broad sense in which it is here used the word must be understood to include both) is to provide for the nation. It is no more his function to get profit for himself out of that provision than it is a clergyman's function to get his stipend. The stipend is a due and necessary adjunct, but not the object, of his life, if he be a true clergyman, any more than his fee (or *honorarium*) is the object of life to a true physician. Neither is his fee the object of life to a true merchant. All three, if true men, have a work to be done irrespective of fee—to be done even at any cost, or for quite the contrary of fee; the pastor's function being to teach, the physician's to heal, and the merchant's, as I have said, to provide. That is to say, he has to understand to their very root the qualities of the thing he deals in, and the means of obtaining or producing it; and he has to apply all this sagacity and energy to the producing or obtaining it in perfect state, and distributing it at the cheapest possible price where it is most needed.

And because the production or obtaining of any commodity involves necessarily the agency of many lives and hands, the merchant becomes in the course of his business the master and governor of large masses of men in a more direct, though less confessed way, than a military officer or pastor; so that on him falls, in great part, the responsibility for the kind of life they lead: and it becomes his duty, not only to be always considering how to produce what he sells in the purest and cheapest forms, but how to make the various employments involved in the production, or transference of it, most beneficial to the men employed.

And as into these two functions, requiring for their right

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

exercise the highest intelligence, as well as patience, kindness, and tact, the merchant is bound to put all his energy, so for their just discharge he is bound, as soldier or physician is bound, to give up, if need be, his life, in such way as it may be demanded of him. Two main points he has in his providing function to maintain : first, his engagements (faithfulness to engagements being the real root of all possibilities in commerce) ; and, secondly, the perfectness and purity of the thing provided ; so that, rather than fail in any engagement, or consent to any deterioration, adulteration, or unjust and exorbitant price of that which he provides, he is bound to meet fearlessly any form of distress, poverty, or labour, which may, through maintenance of these points, come upon him.

Again : in his office as governor of the men employed by him, the merchant or manufacturer is invested with a distinctly paternal authority and responsibility. In most cases, a youth entering a commercial establishment is withdrawn altogether from home influence ; his master must become his father, else he has, for practical and constant help, no father at hand : in all cases the master's authority, together with the general tone and atmosphere of his business, and the character of the men with whom the youth is compelled in the course of it to associate, have more immediate and pressing weight than the home influence, and will usually neutralize it either for good or evil ; so that the only means which the master has of doing justice to the men employed by him is to ask himself sternly whether he is dealing with such subordinate as he would with his own son, if compelled by circumstances to take such a position.

Supposing the captain of a frigate saw it right, or were by any chance obliged, to place his own son in the position of a common sailor ; as he would then treat his son, he is bound always to treat every one of the men under him. So, also, supposing the master of a manufactory saw it right, or were by any chance obliged, to place his own son in the position of an ordinary workman ; as he would then treat his son, he is bound always to treat every one of his men. This is the only

THE ROOTS OF HONOUR

effective, true, or practical RULE which can be given on this point of political economy.

And as the captain of a ship is bound to be the last man to leave his ship in case of wreck, and to share his last crust with the sailors in case of famine, so the manufacturer, in any commercial crisis or distress, is bound to take the suffering of it with his men, and even to take more of it for himself than he allows his men to feel ; as a father would in a famine, shipwreck, or battle, sacrifice himself for his son. . . .

Unto This Last, Essay I

That man is great, and he alone
Who serves a greatness not his own,
For neither praise nor pelf :
Content to know, and be unknown
Whole in himself.

Strong is that man, he only strong
To whose well-ordered will belong
For service and delight,
All powers that, in the face of Wrong,
Establish Right.

.
If such a man there be, where'er
Beneath the sun and moon he fare,
He cannot fare amiss.
Great Nature hath him in her care,
Her cause is his.

.
He nothing human alien deems
Unto himself, nor disesteems
Man's meanest claim upon him :
And where he walks, the mere sunbeams
Drop blessings on him.

OWEN MEREDITH, *A Great Man*

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. Consider and note down some trades in which the wage-earner's employment is bound to be intermittent.
2. See the opening lines of Wordsworth's *The Excursion*, and

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*, Act IV. Select a brief expression from each to describe the two characters contrasted.

3. What modern arrangements are intended partly to supply the benefits to the worker which the noble-minded merchant would desire to provide ?

4. "The production or obtaining of any commodity involves necessarily the agency of many lives and hands." Try to establish this by tracing (a) a cup of coffee, (b) a pocket handkerchief, through the various forms of labour bestowed on each.

5. What agencies to-day are designed partly to supply the place of the old-time apprenticeship ?

6. Compose the opening speech for a debate on the motion, "That if we obtain cheap bargains they are at other people's expense."

THE VEINS OF WEALTH

THE circulation of wealth in a nation resembles that of the blood in the natural body. There is one quickness of the current which comes of cheerful emotion or wholesome exercise ; and another which comes of shame or of fever. There is a flush of the body which is full of warmth and life ; and another which will pass in to putrefaction.

The analogy will hold, down even to minute particulars. For as diseased local determination of the blood involves depression of the general health of the system, all morbid local action of riches will be found ultimately to involve a weakening of the resources of the body politic.

The mode in which this is produced may be at once understood by examining one or two instances of the development of wealth in the simplest possible circumstances.

Suppose two sailors cast away on an uninhabited coast, and obliged to maintain themselves there by their own labour for a series of years.

If they both kept their health, and worked steadily, and in amity with each other, they might build themselves a convenient house, and in time come to possess a certain quantity of cultivated land, together with various stores laid up for future use. All these things would be real riches or property ;

THE VEINS OF WEALTH

and, supposing the men both to have worked equally hard, they would each have right to equal share or use of it. Their political economy¹ would consist merely in careful preservation and just division of these possessions. Perhaps, however, after some time one or other might be dissatisfied with the results of their common farming; and they might in consequence agree to divide the land they had brought under the spade into equal shares, so that each might thenceforward work in his own field and live by it. Suppose that after this arrangement had been made, one of them were to fall ill, and be unable to work on his land at a critical time—say of sowing or harvest.

He would naturally ask the other to sow or reap for him.

Then his companion might say, with perfect justice, "I will do this additional work for you; but if I do it, you must promise to do as much for me at another time. I will count how many hours I spend on your ground, and you shall give me a written promise to work for the same number of hours on mine, whenever I need your help, and you are able to give it."

Suppose the disabled man's sickness to continue, and that under various circumstances, for several years, requiring the help of the other, he on each occasion gave a written pledge to work, as soon as he was able, at his companion's orders, for the same number of hours which the other had given up to him. What will the positions of the two men be when the invalid is able to resume work?

Considered as a "Polis," or state,² they will be poorer than they would have been otherwise: poorer by the withdrawal of what the sick man's labour would have produced in the interval. His friend may perhaps have toiled with an energy quickened by the enlarged need, but in the end his own land and property must have suffered by the withdrawal of so much of his time and thought from them; and the united property of the two men will be certainly less than it would have been if both had remained in health and activity.

But the relations in which they stand to each other are

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

also widely altered. The sick man has not only pledged his labour for some years, but will probably have exhausted his own share of the accumulated stores, and will be in consequence for some time dependent on the other for food, which he can only "pay" or reward him for by yet more deeply pledging his own labour.

Supposing the written promises to be held entirely valid (among civilized nations their validity is secured by legal measures), the person who had hitherto worked for both might now, if he chose, rest altogether, and pass his time in idleness, not only forcing his companion to redeem all the engagements he had already entered into, but exacting from him pledges for further labour, to an arbitrary amount, for what food he had to advance to him.

There might not, from first to last, be the least illegality³ (in the ordinary sense of the word) in the arrangement ; but if a stranger arrived on the coast at this advanced epoch of their political economy, he would find one man commercially Rich ; the other commercially Poor. He would see, perhaps with no small surprise, one passing his days in idleness ; the other labouring for both, and living sparsely, in the hope of recovering his independence, at some distant period.

This is, of course, an example of one only out of many ways in which inequality of possession may be established between different persons, giving rise to the Mercantile forms of Riches and Poverty. In the instance before us, one of the men might from the first have deliberately chosen to be idle, and to put his life in pawn for present ease ; or he might have mismanaged his land, and been compelled to have recourse to his neighbour for food and help, pledging his future labour for it. But what I want the reader to note especially is the fact, common to a large number of typical cases of this kind, that the establishment of the mercantile wealth which consists in a claim upon labour, signifies a political diminution of the real wealth which consists in substantial possessions.

Take another example, more consistent with the ordinary course of affairs of trade. Suppose that three men, instead

THE VEINS OF WEALTH

of two, formed the little isolated republic, and found themselves obliged to separate in order to farm different pieces of land at some distance from each other along the coast ; each estate furnishing a distinct kind of produce, and each more or less in need of the material raised on the other. Suppose that the third man, in order to save the time of all three, undertakes simply to superintend the transference of commodities from one farm to the other ; on condition of receiving some sufficiently remunerative share of every parcel of goods conveyed, or of some other parcel received in exchange for it.

If this carrier or messenger always brings to each estate, from the other, what is chiefly wanted, at the right time, the operations of the two farmers will go on prosperously, and the largest possible result in produce, or wealth, will be attained by the little community. But suppose no intercourse between the landowners is possible, except through the travelling agent ; and that, after a time, this agent, watching the course of each man's agriculture, keeps back the articles with which he has been entrusted until there comes a period of extreme necessity for them, on one side or other, and then exacts in exchange for them all that the distressed farmer can spare of other kinds of produce ; it is easy to see that by ingeniously watching his opportunities, he might possess himself regularly of the greater part of the superfluous produce of the two estates, and at last, in some year of severest trial or scarcity, purchase both for himself, and maintain the former proprietors thenceforward as his labourers or his servants. . . .

The whole question, therefore, respecting not only the advantage, but even the quantity, of national wealth, resolves itself finally into one of abstract justice. It is impossible to conclude, of any given mass of acquired wealth, merely by the fact of its existence, whether it signifies good or evil to the nation in the midst of which it exists. Its real value depends on the moral sign attached to it, just as sternly as that of a mathematical quantity depends on the algebraical sign

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

attached to it.⁴ Any given accumulation of commercial wealth may be indicative, on the one hand, of faithful industries, progressive energies, and productive ingenuities ; or, on the other, it may be indicative of mortal luxury, merciless tyranny, ruinous chicane. Some treasures are heavy with human tears, as an ill-stored harvest with untimely rain ; and some gold is brighter in sunshine than it is in substance.

And these are not, observe, merely moral or pathetic attributes of riches, which the seeker of riches may, if he chooses, despise ; they are literally and sternly, material attributes of riches, depreciating or exalting, incalculably, the monetary signification of the sum in question. One mass of money is the outcome of action which has created,—another, of action which has annihilated,—ten times as much in the gathering of it ; such and such strong hands have been paralysed, as if they had been numbed by nightshade : so many strong men's courage broken, so many productive operations hindered ; this and the other false direction given to labour, and lying image of prosperity set up, on Dura plains⁵ dug into seven-times-heated furnaces. That which seems to be wealth may in verity be only the gilded index of far-reaching ruin ; a wrecker's handful of coin gleaned from the beach to which he has beguiled an argosy ; a camp-follower's bundle of rags unwrapped from the breasts of goodly soldiers dead ; the purchase-pieces of potter's fields,⁶ wherein shall be buried together the citizen and the stranger.

And therefore, the idea that directions can be given for the gaining of wealth, irrespectively of the consideration of its moral sources, or that any general and technical law of purchase and gain can be set down for national practice, is perhaps the most insolently futile of all that ever beguiled men through their vices. So far as I know, there is not in history record of anything so disgraceful to the human intellect as the modern idea that the commercial text, " Buy in the cheapest market and sell in the dearest," represents, or under any circumstances could represent, an available principle of national economy. Buy in the cheapest market ?—yes ;

THE VEINS OF WEALTH

but what made your market cheap ? Charcoal may be cheap among your roof timbers after a fire, and bricks may be cheap in your streets after an earthquake ; but fire and earthquake may not therefore be national benefits. Sell in the dearest ? —yes, truly ; but what made your market dear ? You sold your bread well to-day ; was it to a dying man who gave his last coin for it, and will never need bread more, or to a rich man who to-morrow will buy your farm over your head ; or to a soldier on his way to pillage the bank in which you have put your fortune ?

None of these things you can know. One thing only you can know, namely, whether this dealing of yours is a just and faithful one, which is all you need concern yourself about respecting it ; sure thus to have done your own part in bringing about ultimately in the world a state of things which will not issue in pillage or in death. And thus every question concerning these things merges itself ultimately in the great question of justice.

Unto This Last, Essay II

The world is too much with us ; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers :
Little we see in Nature that is ours ;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon !
This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon ;
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers ;
For this, for everything, we are out of tune ;
It moves us not.—Great God ! I'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn ;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn ;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea ;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.

WORDSWORTH, *Sonnet*

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. Compose a story on the lines of the one told by Ruskin of the two sailors, to illustrate how wealth is produced and owned.

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

2. Explain the allusions in paragraph 2, page 94, from "Dura plains" to "potter's fields."
3. Name some of the "many ways in which inequality of possessions may be established between different persons."
4. Suggest some "accumulation of commercial wealth" which you think is the result of faithful industry, progressive energy, and productive ingenuities.
5. Find out some of the most notable "productive ingenuities" of the past century.
6. What evil effects would you expect to follow if many people thought more of getting rich quickly than of doing some useful work in the world?

FROM "THE CESTUS OF AGLAIA"

[*A series of papers contributed to the "Art Journal," in 1865.*]

LIBERTY

No quality of Art has been more powerful in its influence on public mind ;—none is more frequently the subject of popular praise, or the end of vulgar effort, than what we call "Freedom." It is necessary to determine the justice or injustice of this popular praise. . . .

The practical teaching of the masters of Art was summed by the O of Giotto.¹ Yet that cypher may become, if rightly read, an expression of infinity, at least in one direction of teaching. "You may judge my masterhood of craft," Giotto tells us, "by seeing that I can draw a circle unerringly." And we may safely believe him, understanding him to mean that—though more may be necessary to an artist than such a power—at least *this* power is necessary. The qualities of hand and eye needful to do this are the first conditions of artistic craft.

²Try to draw a circle yourself with a "free" hand, and with a single line. You cannot do it if your hand trembles, nor if it hesitates, nor if it is unmanageable, nor if it is in the common sense of the word "free." So far from being free, it must be under a control as absolute and accurate as if it were fastened to an inflexible bar of steel. And yet it must move, under this necessary control, with perfect, untroubled serenity of ease.

That is the condition of all good work whatsoever. All freedom is error. Every line you lay down is either right or wrong: it may be timidly and awkwardly wrong, or fearlessly and impudently wrong: the aspect of the impudent wrongness is pleasurable to vulgar persons, and is what is

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

commonly called "free" execution: the timid, tottering, hesitating wrongness is rarely so attractive; yet sometimes, if accompanied with good qualities, and right aims in other directions, it becomes in a manner charming, like the inarticulateness of a child: but, whatever the charm or the manner of the error, there is but one question ultimately and seriously to be asked respecting every line you draw, Is it right or wrong? If right, it most assuredly is not a "free" line, but an intensely continent, restrained, and considered line; and the action of the hand in laying it is just as decisive, and just as "free" as the hand of a first-rate surgeon in a critical incision. A great operator told me that his hand could check itself within about the two-hundredth of an inch, in penetrating a membrane; and this, of course, without the help of sight, by sensation only. With help of sight, and in action on a substance which does not quiver nor yield, a fine artist's line is measurable in its purposed direction to considerably less than the thousandth of an inch.

A wide freedom, truly! . . .

I believe we can nowhere find a better type of a perfectly free creature than in the common house-fly. Nor free only, but brave; and irreverent to a degree which I think no human republican could by any philosophy raise himself to. There is no courtesy in him; he does not care whether it is king or clown whom he teases; and in every step of his swift mechanical march, and in every pause of his resolute observation, there is one and the same expression of perfect egotism, perfect independence and self-confidence, and conviction of the world's having been made for flies. Strike at him with your hand. To him the mechanical fact and external aspect of the matter is, what to you it would be, if an acre of red clay, ten feet thick, tore itself up from the ground in one massive field, hovered over you in the air for a second, and came crashing down with an aim! That is the external aspect of it; the inner aspect, to his fly's mind, is of a quite natural and unimportant occurrence—one of the momentary conditions of his active life. He steps out of the

LIBERTY

way of your hand, and alights on the back of it. You cannot terrify him, nor govern him, nor persuade him, nor convince him. He has his own positive opinion on all matters ; not an unwise one, usually, for his own ends ; and will ask no advice of yours. He has no work to do—no tyrannical instinct to obey. The earth-worm has his digging and digesting ; the bee her gathering and building ; the spider her cunning net-work ; the ant her treasury and accounts. All things are comparatively slaves, or people of vulgar business. But your fly, free in the air, free in the chamber—a black incarnation of caprice,—wandering, investigating, flitting, flirting, feasting at his will, with rich variety of choice in feast, from the heaped sweets in the grocer's window to those of the butcher's back yard, and from the galled place on your cab-horse's back, to the brown spot in the road, from which, as the hoof disturbs him, he rises with angry republican buzz—what freedom is like his ?

For captivity, again, perhaps your poor watch-dog is as sorrowful a type as you will easily find. Mine certainly is. The day is lovely, but I must write this, and cannot go out with him. He is chained in the yard, because I do not like dogs in rooms, and the gardener does not like dogs in gardens. He has no books,—nothing but his own weary thoughts for company, and a group of those free flies, whom he snaps at, with sullen ill success. Such dim hope as he may have that I may yet take him out with me, will be, hour by hour, disappointed, or worse, darkened at once into a leaden despair by an authoritative “ No ”—too well understood. His fidelity only seals his fate ; (if he would not watch for me, he would be sent away, and go hunting with some happier master ; but he watches, and is wise, and faithful, and miserable), and his high animal intellect only gives him the wistful power of wonder, and sorrow, and desire, and affection, which embitter his captivity. Yet of the two, would we rather be watch-dog or fly ?

Indeed, the first point we have all to determine is not how free we are, but what kind of creatures we are. It is of small

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

importance to any of us whether we get liberty ; but of the greatest that we deserve it. Whether we can win it, fate must determine ; but that we will be worthy of it, we may ourselves determine ; and the sorrowfullest fate, of all that we can suffer, is to have it *without* deserving it.

The best examples of the results of wise normal discipline in Art will be found in whatever evidence remains respecting the lives of great Italian painters in eras of progress. But just in proportion to the admirableness and efficiency of the life, will be usually the scantiness of its history. The individualities and liberties which are only causes of destruction may be recorded, but the loyal conditions of its daily breath are never told. Because Leonardo³ made models of machines, dug canals, built fortifications, and dissipated half his Art-power in capricious ingenuities, we have many anecdotes of him, but no picture of importance on canvas, and only a few withered stains of one upon a wall.⁴ But because his pupil, or reputed pupil, Luini, laboured in constant and successful simplicity, we have no anecdotes of him, though hundreds of noble works. Luini is, perhaps, the best central type of the highly-trained Italian painter. He is the only man who entirely unites the religious temper which was the spirit-life of Art, with the physical power which was its bodily life. He joins the purity and passion of Angelico to the strength of Veronese ; the two elements, poised in perfect balance, are so calmed and restrained each by the other, that most observers lose the sense of both.

*The Cestus of Aglaia,*⁵ VI

I, loving freedom, and untried ;
No sport of every random gust,
Yet being to myself a guide,
Too blindly have reposed my trust:
And oft, when in my heart was heard
Thy timely mandate, I deferred
The task, in smoother walks to stray ;
But thee I now would serve more strictly, if I may.

WORDSWORTH, *Ode to Duty*

LIBERTY

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. Suggest some exercises for training the hand to obey and the eye to see.

2. Test your capacity for drawing, each in one stroke, (a) a straight line ; (b) a straight line of given length ; (c) a circle ; (d) an ellipse.

3. Write a short paragraph on each of (a) Self-discipline ; (b) Apprenticeship ; (c) The Joy of Growing Mastery.

4. Find some poems on freedom in Tennyson, Wordsworth, or earlier poets, and learn the one you like best.

5. Find out something about Giotto, Leonardo da Vinci, Fra Angelico, and Luini. Set down the most interesting points.

6. What active games help to train and discipline the eyes and limbs ?

What special faculties of mind and body do you think go to produce an expert cricketer or a brilliant tennis-player ?

FROM "THE SEVEN LAMPS OF ARCHITECTURE"

[Written in 1848-9, and doing for the art of building what the author's "Modern Painters" did for the art of painting. The names of the Lamps, or Principles, show that sincerity and honesty of purpose are fundamental qualities of good building, and that the ideals of the time, national, social, and intellectual, are expressed in architecture. Ruskin everywhere teaches that Art is not an end in itself; it is an instrument for human achievement; and long before such doctrines were popular the author persistently taught that it is justified only when moralized and socialized. In his "Seven Lamps" Ruskin strikes the first note of his later enthusiastic preaching of the dignity of work and of the worker.]

THE LAMP OF SACRIFICE

ARCHITECTURE is the art which so disposes and adorns the edifices raised by man, for whatsoever uses, that the sight of them may contribute to his mental health, power, and pleasure.

It is very necessary, in the outset of all inquiry, to distinguish carefully between Architecture and Building.

To build—literally, to confirm—is by common understanding to put together and adjust the several pieces of any edifice or receptacle of a considerable size. Thus we have church building, house building, ship building, and coach building. That one edifice stands, another floats, and another is suspended on iron springs, makes no difference in the nature of the art, if so it may be called, of building or edification. The persons who profess that art, are severally builders, ecclesiastical, naval, or of whatever other name their work may justify; but building does not become architecture merely by the stability of what it erects; and it is no more architecture which raises a church, or which fits it to receive and contain with comfort a required number of persons occupied in certain

THE LAMP OF SACRIFICE

religious offices, than it is architecture which makes a carriage commodious, or a ship swift. I do not, of course, mean that the word is not often, or even may not be legitimately, applied in such a sense (as we speak of naval architecture); but in that sense architecture ceases to be one of the fine arts, and it is therefore better not to run the risk, by loose nomenclature, of the confusion which would arise, and has often arisen, from extending principles which belong altogether to building, into the sphere of architecture proper.

Let us, therefore, at once confine the name to that art which, taking up and admitting, as conditions of its working, the necessities and common uses of the building, impresses on its form certain characters venerable or beautiful, but otherwise unnecessary. Thus, I suppose, no one would call the laws architectural which determine the height of a breastwork or the position of a bastion. But if to the stone facing of that bastion be added an unnecessary feature, as a cable moulding, *that* is Architecture. It would be similarly unreasonable to call battlements or machicolations,¹ architectural features, so long as they consist only of an advanced gallery supported on projecting masses, with open intervals beneath for offence. But if these projecting masses be carved beneath into rounded courses, which are useless, and if the headings of the intervals be arched and trefoiled, which is useless, *that* is Architecture. It may not be always easy to draw the line so sharply, because there are few buildings which have not some pretence or colour of being architectural; neither can there be any architecture which is not based on building, nor any good architecture which is not based on good building; but it is perfectly easy, and very necessary, to keep the ideas distinct, and to understand fully that Architecture concerns itself only with those characters of an edifice which are above and beyond its common use. I say common; because a building raised to the honour of God, or in memory of men, has surely a use to which its architectural adornment fits it; but not a use which limits, by any inevitable necessities, its plan or details.

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

Architecture proper, then, naturally arranges itself under five heads :

Devotional ; including all buildings raised for God's service or honour.

Memorial ; including both monuments and tombs.

Civil ; including every edifice raised by nations or societies, for purposes of common business or pleasure.

Military ; including all private and public architecture of defence.

Domestic ; including every rank and kind of dwelling-place.

Now, of the principles which I would endeavour to develop, while all must be, as I have said, applicable to every stage and style of the art, some, and especially those which are exciting rather than directing, have necessarily fuller reference to one kind of building than another ; and among these I would place first that spirit which, having influence in all, has nevertheless such especial reference to devotional and memorial architecture—the spirit which offers for such work precious things, simply because they are precious ; not as being necessary to the building, but as an offering, surrendering, and sacrifice of what is to ourselves desirable. . . .

To define this Lamp, or Spirit, of Sacrifice, clearly. I have said that it prompts us to the offering of precious things, merely because they are precious, not because they are useful or necessary. It is a spirit, for instance, which of two marbles, equally beautiful, applicable and durable, would choose the more costly, because it was so, and of two kinds of decoration, equally effective, would choose the more elaborate because it was so, in order that it might in the same compass present more cost and more thought. . . .

God never forgets any work or labour of love ; and whatever it may be of which the first and best portions or powers have been presented to Him, He will multiply and increase sevenfold. Therefore, though it may not be necessarily the interest of religion to admit the service of the arts, the arts will never

THE LAMP OF SACRIFICE

flourish until they have been primarily devoted to that service—devoted, both by architect and employer ; by the one in scrupulous, earnest, affectionate design ; by the other in expenditure at least more frank, at least less calculating, than that which he would admit in the indulgence of his own private feelings. Let this principle be but once fairly acknowledged among us ; and however it may be chilled and repressed in practice, however feeble may be its real influence, however the sacredness of it may be diminished by counter-workings of vanity and self-interest, yet its mere acknowledgment would bring a reward ; and with our present accumulation of means and of intellect, there would be such an impulse and vitality given to art as it has not felt since the thirteenth century.² And I do not assert this as other than a natural consequence : I should, indeed, expect a larger measure of every great and spiritual faculty to be always given where those faculties had been wisely and religiously employed ; but the impulse to which I refer, would be, humanly speaking, certain ; and would naturally result from obedience to the two great conditions enforced by the Spirit of Sacrifice, first, that we should in everything do our best ; and, secondly, that we should consider increase of apparent labour as an increase of beauty in the building. . . .

For the first : it is alone enough to secure success, and it is for want of observing it that we continually fail. We are none of us so good architects as to be able to work habitually beneath our strength ; and yet there is not a building that I know of, lately raised, wherein it is not sufficiently evident that neither architect nor builder has done his best. It is the especial characteristic of modern work. All old work nearly has been hard work. It may be the hard work of children, of barbarians, of rustics ; but it is always their utmost. Ours has as constantly the look of money's worth, of a stopping short wherever and whenever we can, of a lazy compliance with low conditions ; never of a fair putting forth of our strength. Let us have done with this kind of work at once : cast off every temptation to it : do not let us degrade

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

ourselves voluntarily, and then mutter and mourn over our short comings ; let us confess our poverty or our parsimony, but not belie our human intellect. It is not even a question of how *much* we are to do, but of how it is to be done ; it is not a question of doing more, but of doing better. Do not let us boss our roofs with wretched, half-worked, blunt-edged rosettes ; do not let us flank our gates with rigid imitations of mediæval statuary. Such things are mere insults to common sense, and only unfit us for feeling the nobility of their prototypes. We have so much, suppose, to be spent in decoration ; let us go to the Flaxman of his time,³ whoever he may be ; and bid him carve for us a single statue, frieze, or capital, or as many as we can afford, compelling upon him the one condition, that they shall be the best he can do ; place them where they will be of most value, and be content. Our other capitals may be mere blocks, and our other niches empty. No matter : better our work unfinished than all bad. It may be that we do not desire ornament of so high an order : choose, then, a less developed style, as also, if you will, rougher material ; the law which we are enforcing requires only that what we pretend to do and to give, shall both be the best of their kind ; choose, therefore, the Norman hatchet work, instead of the Flaxman frieze and statue, but let it be the best hatchet work ; and if you cannot afford marble, use Caen stone, but from the best bed ; and if not stone, brick,⁴ but the best brick ; preferring always what is good of a lower order of work or material, to what is bad of a higher ; for this is not only the way to improve every kind of work, and to put every kind of material to better use ; but it is more honest and unpretending, and is in harmony with other just, upright, and manly principles, whose range we shall have presently to take into consideration.

The other condition which we had to notice, was the value of the appearance of labour upon architecture.⁵ I have spoken of this before ; and it is, indeed, one of the most frequent sources of pleasure which belong to the art, always, however, within certain somewhat remarkable limits. For it

106

THE LAMP OF SACRIFICE

does not at first appear easily to be explained why labour, as represented by materials of value, should, without sense of wrong or error, bear being wasted ; while the waste of actual workmanship is always painful, so soon as it is apparent. But so it is, that, while precious materials may, with a certain profusion and negligence, be employed for the magnificence of what is seldom seen, the work of man cannot be carelessly and idly bestowed, without an immediate sense of wrong ; as if the strength of the living creature were never intended by its Maker to be sacrificed in vain, though it is well for us sometimes to part with what we esteem precious of substance, as showing that in such service it becomes but dross and dust. . . . In general it is less the mere loss of labour that offends us, than the lack of judgment implied by such loss ; so that if men confessedly work for work's sake, and it does not appear that they are ignorant where or how to make their labour tell, we shall not be grossly offended. On the contrary, we shall be pleased if the work be lost in carrying out a principle, or in avoiding a deception. It, indeed, is a law properly belonging to another part of our subject, but it may be allowably stated here, that, whenever, by the construction of a building, some parts of it are hidden from the eye which are the continuation of others bearing some consistent ornament, it is not well that the ornament should cease in the parts concealed ; credit is given for it, and it should not be deceptively withdrawn ; as, for instance, in the sculpture of the backs of the statues of a temple pediment ; never, perhaps, to be seen, but yet not lawfully to be left unfinished. And so in the working out of ornaments in dark or concealed places, in which it is best to err on the side of completion ; and in the carrying round of string courses,⁶ and other such continuous work ; not but that they may stop sometimes, on the point of going into some palpably impenetrable recess, but then let them stop boldly and markedly, on some distinct terminal ornament, and never be supposed to exist where they do not.

The Seven Lamps of Architecture, ch. i

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

We cannot kindle when we will
The fire which in the heart resides ;
The spirit bloweth and is still,
In mystery our soul abides :
But tasks in hours of insight will'd
Can be through hours of gloom fulfill'd.

With aching hands and bleeding feet
We dig and heap, lay stone on stone ;
We bear the burden and the heat
Of the long day, and wish 'twere done.
Not till the hours of light return
All we have built do we discern.

M. ARNOLD, *Morality*

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. What fine examples of architecture have you seen ? To which of Ruskin's five headings do they severally belong ?
2. Write a short essay on "All old work nearly has been hard work," and illustrate by reference to some actual structure.
3. What are the various shams which Ruskin blames in this essay ?
4. Make sure that you can define a statue, a frieze, a capital, Norman hatchet work, terminal ornament.
5. Find out the leading characteristics of (a) Tudor, (b) Jacobean, (c) Georgian houses, and write a few notes naming examples you have seen.
6. What books do you know which describe (a) old, (b) famous, (c) beautiful buildings ?
Name any such buildings you have actually seen.

THE LAMP OF TRUTH

I WOULD have the Spirit or Lamp of Truth clear in the hearts of our artists and handicraftsmen, not as if the truthful practice of handicrafts could far advance the cause of truth, but because I would fain see the handicrafts themselves urged by the spurs of chivalry : and it is, indeed, marvellous to see what power and universality there are in this single principle, and how in the consulting or forgetting of it lies half the dignity or decline of every art and act of man. . . .

THE LAMP OF TRUTH

The violations of truth, which dishonour poetry and painting, are for the most part confined to the treatment of their subjects. But in architecture another and a less subtle, more contemptible, violation of truth is possible ; a direct falsity of assertion respecting the nature of material,¹ or the quantity of labour. And this is, in the full sense of the word, wrong ; it is as truly deserving of reprobation as any other moral delinquency ; it is unworthy alike of architects and of nations ; and it has been a sign, wherever it has widely and with toleration existed, of a singular debasement of the arts ; that it is not a sign of worse than this, of a general want of severe probity, can be accounted for only by our knowledge of the strange separation which has for some centuries existed between the arts and all other subjects of human intellect, as matters of conscience. This withdrawal of conscientiousness from among the faculties concerned with art, while it has destroyed the arts themselves, has also rendered in a measure nugatory the evidence which otherwise they might have presented respecting the character of the respective nations among whom they have been cultivated ; otherwise, it might appear more than strange that a nation so distinguished for its general uprightness and faith as the English, should admit in their architecture more of pretence, concealment, and deceit, than any other of this or of past time.

They are admitted in thoughtlessness, but with fatal effect upon the art in which they are practised. If there were no other causes for the failures which of late have marked every great occasion for architectural exertion, these petty dishonesties would be enough to account for all. It is the first step, and not the least, toward greatness to do away with these ; the first, because so evidently and easily in our power. We may not be able to command good, or beautiful, or inventive architecture ; but we *can* command an honest architecture : the meagreness of poverty may be pardoned, the sternness of utility respected ; but what is there but scorn for the meanness of deception ?

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

Architectural Deceits are broadly to be considered under three heads :

1st. The suggestion of a mode of structure or support, other than the true one ; as in pendants of late Gothic roofs.

2nd. The painting of surfaces to represent some other material than that of which they actually consist (as in the marbling of wood), or the deceptive representation of sculptured ornament upon them.

3rd. The use of cast or machine-made ornaments of any kind. . . .

1st. STRUCTURAL DECEITS. I have limited these to the determined and purposed suggestion of a mode of support other than the true one. The architect is not *bound* to exhibit structure ; nor are we to complain of him for concealing it, any more than we should regret that the outer surfaces of the human frame conceal much of its anatomy ; nevertheless, that building will generally be the noblest, which to an intelligent eye discovers the great secrets of its structure, as an animal form does, although from a careless observer they may be concealed. . . . With deceptive concealments of structure are to be classed, though still more blameable, deceptive assumptions of it,—the introduction of members which should have, or profess to have, a duty, and have none.² . . . The most flagrant instance of this barbarism that I remember (though it prevails partially in all the spires of the Netherlands), is the lantern of St Ouen at Rouen, where the pierced buttress, having an ogee curve, looks about as much calculated to bear a thrust as a switch of willow ; and the pinnacles, huge and richly decorated, have evidently no work to do whatsoever, but stand round the central tower, like four idle servants, as they are—heraldic supporters, that central tower being merely a hollow crown, which needs no more buttressing than a basket does. . . .

Perhaps the most fruitful source of these kinds of corruption which we have to guard against in recent times, is one

THE LAMP OF TRUTH

which, nevertheless, comes in a "questionable shape," and of which it is not easy to determine the proper laws and limits ; I mean the use of iron. The definition of the art of architecture, given in the first chapter, is independent of its materials : nevertheless, that art having been, up to the beginning of the present century, practised for the most part in clay, stone, or wood, it has resulted that the sense of proportion and the laws of structure have been based, the one altogether, the other in great part, on the necessities consequent on the employment of those materials ; and that the entire or principal employment of metallic framework would, therefore, be generally felt as a departure from the first principles of the art. Abstractedly there appears no reason why iron should not be used as well as wood ;³ and the time is probably near when a new system of architectural laws will be developed, adapted entirely to metallic construction. But I believe that the tendency of all present sympathy and association is to limit the idea of architecture to non-metallic work ; and that not without reason. For architecture being in its perfection the earliest, as in its elements it is necessarily the first, of arts, will always precede, in any barbarous nation, the possession of the science necessary either for the obtaining or the management of iron. Its first existence and its earliest laws must, therefore, depend upon the use of materials accessible in quantity, and on the surface of the earth ; that is to say, clay, wood, or stone : and as I think it cannot but be generally felt that one of the chief dignities of architecture is its historical use ; and since the latter is partly dependent on consistency of style, it will be felt right to retain as far as may be, even in periods of more advanced science, the materials and principles of earlier ages. . . . Yet it is evident that metals may, and sometimes must, enter into the construction to a certain extent, as nails in wooden architecture, and therefore as legitimately rivets and solderings in stone ; neither can we well deny to the Gothic architect the power of supporting statues, pinnacles, or traceries by iron bars ; and if we grant this, I do not see how we can help allowing

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

Brunelleschi his iron chain around the dome of Florence, or the builders of Salisbury their elaborate iron binding of the central tower. If, however, we would not fall into the old sophistry of the grains of corn and the heap, we must find a rule which may enable us to stop somewhere. This rule is, I think, that metals may be used as a *cement*, but not as a *support*. For as cements of other kinds are often so strong that the stones may easier be broken than separated, and the wall becomes a solid mass, without for that reason losing the character of architecture, there is no reason why, when a nation has obtained the knowledge and practice of iron work, metal rods or rivets should not be used in the place of cement, and establish the same or a greater strength and adherence, without in any wise inducing departure from the types and system of architecture before established ; nor does it make any difference except as to sightliness, whether the metal bands or rods so employed, be in the body of the wall or on its exterior, or set as stays and cross-bands ; so only that the use of them be always and distinctly one which might be superseded by mere strength of cement ; as for instance, if a pinnacle or mullion be propped or tied by an iron band, it is evident that the iron only prevents the separation of the stones by lateral force, which the cement would have done, had it been strong enough. But the moment that the iron in the least degree takes the place of the stone, and acts by its resistance to crushing, and bears super-incumbent weight, or if it acts by its own weight as a counterpoise, and so supersedes the use of pinnacles or buttresses in resisting a lateral thrust, or if, in the form of a rod or girder, it is used to do what wooden beams would have done as well, that instant the building ceases, so far as such applications of metal extend, to be true architecture. . . .

2nd. SURFACE DECEITS. These may be generally defined as the inducing the supposition of some form of material which does not actually exist ; as commonly in the painting of wood to represent marble, or in the painting of ornaments

THE LAMP OF TRUTH

in deceptive relief, etc. But we must be careful to observe, that the evil of them consists always in definitely attempted *deception*, and that it is a matter of some nicety to mark the point where deception begins or ends. . . .

Touching the false representation of material, the question is infinitely more simple, and the law more sweeping ; all such imitations are utterly base and inadmissible. It is melancholy to think of the time and expense lost in marbling the shop fronts of London alone, and of the waste of our resources in absolute vanities, in things about which no mortal cares, by which no eye is ever arrested, unless painfully, and which do not add one whit to comfort, or cleanliness, or even to that great object of commercial art—conspicuousness. But in architecture of a higher rank, how much more is it to be condemned ! I have made it a rule in the present work not to blame specifically ; but I may, perhaps, be permitted, while I express my sincere admiration of the very noble entrance and general architecture of the British Museum, to express also my regret that the noble granite foundation of the staircase should be mocked at its landing by an imitation, the more blameable because tolerably successful. The only effect of it is to cast a suspicion upon the true stones below, and upon every bit of granite afterward encountered. One feels a doubt, after it, of the honesty of Memnon himself.⁴ . . .

Painting, however, is not the only mode in which material may be concealed, or rather simulated ; for merely to conceal is, as we have seen, no wrong. Whitewash, for instance, though often (by no means always) to be regretted as a concealment, is not to be blamed as a falsity. It shows itself for what it is, and asserts nothing of what is beneath it. Gilding has become, from its frequent use, equally innocent. It is understood for what it is, a film merely, and is, therefore, allowable to any extent : I do not say expedient : it is one of the most abused means of magnificence we possess, and I much doubt whether any use we ever make of it, balances that loss of pleasure, which, from the frequent sight

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

and perpetual suspicion of it, we suffer in the contemplation of anything that is verily of gold. I think gold was meant to be seldom seen, and to be admired as a precious thing ; and I sometimes wish that truth should so far literally prevail as that all should be gold that glittered, or rather that nothing should glitter that was not gold. Nevertheless, nature herself does not dispense with such semblance, but uses light for it ; and I have too great a love for old and saintly art to part with its burnished field, or radiant nimbus ; only it should be used with respect, and to express magnificence, or sacredness, and not in lavish vanity, or in sign painting.

It is well known, that what is meant by a church's being built of marble is, in nearly all cases, only that a veneering of marble has been fastened on the rough brick wall, built with certain projections to receive it ; and that what appear to be massy stones, are nothing more than external slabs.

Now, it is evident, that, in this case, the question of right is on the same ground as in that of gilding. If it be clearly understood that a marble facing does not pretend or imply a marble wall, there is no harm in it ; and as it is also evident that, when very precious stones are used, as jaspers and serpentines, it must become, not only an extravagant and vain increase of expense, but sometimes an actual impossibility, to obtain mass of them enough to build with, there is no resource but this of veneering ; nor is there anything to be alleged against it on the head of durability, such work having been by experience found to last as long, and in as perfect condition, as any kind of masonry. It is, therefore, to be considered as simply an art of mosaic on a large scale, the ground being of brick, or any other material ; and when lovely stones are to be obtained, it is a manner which should be thoroughly understood, and often practised. Nevertheless, as we esteem the shaft of a column more highly for its being of a single block, and as we do not regret the loss of substance and value which there is in things of solid gold, silver, agate, or ivory ; so I think that walls themselves may be regarded with a more just complacency if they are known

THE LAMP OF TRUTH

to be all of noble substance ; and that rightly weighing the demands of the two principles of which we have hitherto spoken—Sacrifice and Truth—we should sometimes rather spare external ornament than diminish the unseen value and consistency of what we do ; and I believe that a better manner of design, and a more careful and studious, if less abundant, decoration would follow, upon the consciousness of thoroughness in the substance. And, indeed, this is to be remembered, with respect to all the points we have examined ; that while we have traced the limits of license, we have not fixed those of that high rectitude which refuses license. It is thus true that there is no falsity, and much beauty, in the use of external colour, and that it is lawful to paint either pictures or patterns on whatever surfaces may seem to need enrichment. But it is not less true, that such practices are essentially unarchitectural ; and while we cannot say that there is actual danger in an over use of them, seeing that they have been *always* used most lavishly in the times of most noble art, yet they divide the work into two parts and kinds, one of less durability than the other, which dies away from it in process of ages, and leaves it, unless it have noble qualities of its own, naked and bare. That enduring *noblesse* I should, therefore, call truly architectural ; and it is not until this has been secured, that the accessory power of painting may be called in, for the delight of the immediate time ; nor this, as I think, until every resource of a more stable kind has been exhausted. The true colours of architecture are those of natural stone, and I would fain see these taken advantage of to the full. Every variety of hue, from pale yellow to purple, passing through orange, red, and brown, is entirely at our command ; nearly every kind of green and grey is also attainable ; and with these, and pure white, what harmonies might we not achieve ? Of stained and variegated stone, the quantity is unlimited, the kinds innumerable ; where brighter colours are required, let glass, and gold protected by glass, be used in mosaic—a kind of work as durable as the solid stone, and incapable of losing its lustre

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

by time—and let the painter's work be reserved for the shadowed loggia and inner chamber. This is the true and faithful way of building ; where this cannot be, the device of external colouring may, indeed, be employed without dishonour ; but it must be with the warning reflection, that a time will come when such aids must pass away, and when the building will be judged in its lifelessness, dying the death of the dolphin. Better the less bright, more enduring fabric.

The last form of fallacy which it will be remembered we had to deprecate, was the substitution of cast or machine work for that of the hand, generally expressible as Operative Deceit.

There are two reasons, both weighty, against this practice : one, that all cast and machine work is bad, as work ; the other, that it is dishonest. Of its badness I shall speak in another place, that being evidently no efficient reason against its use when other cannot be had. Its dishonesty, however, which, to my mind, is of the grossest kind, is, I think, a sufficient reason to determine absolute and unconditional rejection of it.

Ornament, as I have often before observed, has two entirely distinct sources of agreeableness : one, that of the abstract beauty of its forms, which, for the present, we will suppose to be the same whether they come from the hand or the machine ; the other, the sense of human labour and care spent upon it. How great this latter influence we may perhaps judge, by considering that there is not a cluster of weeds growing in any cranny of ruin which has not a beauty in all respects *nearly* equal, and, in some, immeasurably superior, to that of the most elaborate sculpture of its stones : and that all our interest in the carved work, our sense of its richness, though it is tenfold less rich than the knots of grass beside it ; of its delicacy, though it is a thousandfold less delicate ; of its admirableness, though a millionfold less admirable ; results from our consciousness of its being the work of poor, clumsy, toilsome man. Its true delightfulness depends on our discovering in it the record of thoughts, and intents, and

116

THE LAMP OF TRUTH

trials, and heart-breakings—of recoveries and joyfulnesses of success : all this *can* be traced by a practised eye ; but, granting it even obscure, it is presumed or understood ; and in that is the worth of the thing, just as much as the worth of anything else we call precious. . . . I believe no cause to have been more active in the degradation of our natural feeling for beauty than the constant use of cast-iron ornaments. The common iron work of the middle ages was as simple as it was effective, composed of leafage cut flat out of sheet iron, and twisted at the workman's will. No ornaments, on the contrary, are so cold, clumsy, and vulgar, so essentially incapable of a fine line or shadow, as those of cast iron ; and while, on the score of truth, we can hardly allege anything against them, since they are always distinguishable, at a glance, from wrought and hammered work, and stand only for what they are, yet I feel very strongly that there is no hope of the progress of the arts of any nation which indulges in these vulgar and cheap substitutes for real decoration.

The Seven Lamps of Architecture, ch. ii

On many a man descends the fire divine ;
But foolish souls too oft its purpose foil
With false and idle tasks, that dim and soil
The lamp through which their lamp was meant to shine ;

Thy spark was kindled in that central fire—the Light of Light.

A. MATHESON, *To Thomas Carlyle*

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. Look for some " architectural deceits " in the buildings of your neighbourhood. Can you account for them ?
2. What advantages can you suggest in the use of iron as a material for building in modern cities ?
3. Do you like the idea that " Gold was meant to be seldom seen, and to be admired as a precious thing " ? Where have you seen it introduced sparingly or for a definite purpose, as if the artist thought so ?
4. What is ' mosaic ' ? Where have you seen any ?

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

5. What is the difference between 'wrought' and 'cast' iron? Where do you think the latter may justly be used?
6. Draw a design for a lamp sconce in bent sheet iron.

THE LAMP OF POWER

IN thus reverting to the memories of those works of architecture by which we have been most pleasurably impressed, it will generally happen that they fall into two broad classes: the one characterized by an exceeding preciousness and delicacy, to which we recur with a sense of affectionate admiration; and the other by a severe, and, in many cases, mysterious, majesty, which we remember with an undiminished awe, like that felt at the presence and operation of some great Spiritual Power. From about these two groups, more or less harmonized by intermediate examples, but always distinctively marked by features of beauty or of power, there will be swept away, in multitudes, the memories of buildings, perhaps, in their first address to our minds, of no inferior pretension, but owing their impressiveness to characters of less enduring nobility—to value of material, accumulation of ornament, or ingenuity of mechanical construction. Especial interest may, indeed, have been awakened by such circumstances, and the memory may have been, consequently, rendered tenacious of particular parts or effects of the structure; but it will recall even these only by an active effort, and then without emotion; while in passive moments, and with thrilling influence, the images of purer beauty, and of more spiritual power, will return in a fair and solemn company; and while the pride of many a stately palace, and the wealth of many a jewelled shrine, perish from our thoughts in a dust of gold, there will rise, through their dimness, the white image of some secluded marble chapel, by river or forest side, with the fretted flower-work shrinking under its arches, as if under vaults of late-fallen snow; or the vast weariness of some shadowy wall whose separate stones are like mountain foundations, and yet numberless.

THE LAMP OF POWER

Now, the difference between these two orders of building is not merely that which there is in nature between things beautiful and sublime. It is, also, the difference between what is derivative and original¹ in man's work ; for whatever is in architecture fair or beautiful, is imitated from natural forms ; and what is not so derived, but depends for its dignity upon arrangement and government received from human mind, becomes the expression of the power of that mind, and receives a sublimity high in proportion to the power expressed. All building, therefore, shows man either as gathering or governing ; and the secrets of his success are his knowing what to gather, and how to rule. These are the two great intellectual Lamps of Architecture ; the one consisting in a just and humble veneration for the works of God upon the earth, and the other in an understanding of the dominion over those works which has been vested in man. . . .

I have seen, in recent efforts, much contest between two schools, one affecting originality, and the other legality—many attempts at beauty of design—many ingenious adaptations of construction ; but I have never seen any aim at the expression of abstract power ; never any appearance of a consciousness that, in this primal art of man, there is room for the marking of his relations with the mightiest, as well as the fairest, works of God ; and that those works themselves have been permitted, by their Master and his, to receive an added glory from their association with earnest efforts of human thought. . . .

Let us, then, see what is this power and majesty, which Nature herself does not disdain to accept from the works of man ; and what that sublimity in the masses built up by his coralline-like energy,² which is honourable, even when transferred by association to the dateless hills, which it needed earthquakes to lift, and deluges to mould. . . .

The fact is, that the apprehension of the size of natural objects, as well as of architecture, depends more on fortunate excitement of the imagination than on measurements by the

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

eye ; and the architect has a peculiar advantage in being able to press close upon the sight such magnitude as he can command. There are few rocks, even among the Alps, that have a clear vertical fall as high as the choir of Beauvais ; and if we secure a good precipice of wall, or a sheer and unbroken flank of tower, and place them where there are no enormous natural features to oppose them, we shall feel in them no want of sublimity of size. And it may be matter of encouragement in this respect, though one also of regret, to observe how much oftener man destroys natural sublimity, than nature crushes human power. It does not need much to humiliate a mountain. A hut will sometimes do it ; I never look up to the Col de Balme from Chamouni, without a violent feeling of provocation against its hospitable little cabin, whose bright white walls form a visibly four-square spot on the green ridge, and entirely destroy all idea of its elevation. A single villa will often mar a whole landscape, and dethrone a dynasty of hills ; and the acropolis of Athens,³ Parthenon and all, has, I believe, been dwarfed into a model by the palace lately built beneath it. The fact is, that hills are not so high as we fancy them, and, when to the actual impression of no mean comparative size, is added the sense of the toil of manly hand and thought, a sublimity is reached, which nothing but gross error in arrangement of its parts can destroy.

While, therefore, it is not to be supposed that mere size will ennoble a mean design, yet every increase of magnitude will bestow upon it a certain degree of nobleness : so that it is well to determine at first, whether the building is to be markedly beautiful, or markedly sublime ; and if the latter, not to be withheld by respect to smaller parts from reaching largeness of scale ; provided only, that it be evidently in the architect's power to reach at least that degree of magnitude which is the lowest at which sublimity begins, rudely definable as that which will make a living figure look less than life beside it. It is the misfortune of most of our modern buildings that we would fain have an universal excellence in them ; and so part of the funds must go in painting, part in gilding, part in

120

THE LAMP OF POWER

fitting up, part in painted windows, part in small steeples, part in ornaments here and there ; and neither the windows, nor the steeple, nor the ornaments, are worth their materials. For there is a crust about the impressible part of men's minds, which must be pierced through before they can be touched to the quick ; and though we may prick at it and scratch it in a thousand separate places, we might as well have let it alone if we do not come through somewhere with a deep thrust : and if we can give such a thrust anywhere, there is no need of another ; it need not be even so " wide as a church door,"⁴ so that it be *enough*. And mere weight will do this ; it is a clumsy way of doing it, but an effectual one, too ; and the apathy which cannot be pierced through by a small steeple, nor shone through by a small window, can be broken through in a moment by the mere weight of a great wall.

The Seven Lamps of Architecture, ch. iii

I met a traveller from an antique land
Who said : Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. . . . Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamp'd on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed ;
And on the pedestal these words appear :
' My name is Ozymandias, king of kings :
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair ! '
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

SHELLEY, *Ozymandias*

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. What structures have you seen which impressed you on account of (a) value of material, or (b) accumulation of ornament, or (c) ingenuity of mechanical construction ?
2. " Whatever is in architecture fair or beautiful, is imitated

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

from natural forms." Write a paragraph to show you understand this.

3. Name some great buildings which excite your imagination by their massiveness. What, if any, ornament have they?

4. What ancient buildings were famous for their colossal size?

5. Write a historical sketch of English homes (a) from Boadicea to Alfred; (b) from the Norman Conquest to Elizabeth; (c) since 1600; with two drawings for each.

6. Make a sketch of windows (a) ecclesiastical, (b) domestic, in some chosen century.

THE LAMP OF BEAUTY

WHAT is the place of ornament? Consider first that the characters of natural objects which the architect can represent are few and abstract. The greater part of those delights by which Nature recommends herself to man at all times, cannot be conveyed by him into his imitative work. He cannot make his grass green and cool and good to rest upon, which in nature is its chief use to man; nor can he make his flowers tender and full of colour and of scent, which in nature are their chief powers of giving joy. Those qualities which alone he can secure are certain severe characters of form, such as men only see in nature on deliberate examination, and by the full and set appliance of sight and thought: a man must lie down on the bank of grass on his breast and set himself to watch and penetrate the intertwining of it, before he finds that which is good to be gathered by the architect. So then while Nature is at all times pleasant to us, and while the sight and sense of her work may mingle happily with all our thoughts, and labours, and times of existence, that image of her which the architect carries away represents what we can only perceive in her by direct intellectual exertion, and demands from us, wherever it appears, an intellectual exertion of a similar kind in order to understand it and feel it. It is the written or sealed impression of a thing sought out, it is the shaped result of inquiry and bodily expression of thought.

THE LAMP OF BEAUTY

Now let us consider for an instant what would be the effect of continually repeating an expression of a beautiful thought to any other of the senses at times when the mind could not address that sense to the understanding of it. Suppose that in time of serious occupation, of stern business, a companion should repeat in our ears continually some favourite passage of poetry, over and over again all day long. We should not only soon be utterly sick and weary of the sound of it, but that sound would at the end of the day have so sunk into the habit of the ear that the entire meaning of the passage would be dead to us, and it would ever thenceforward require some effort to fix and recover it. The music of it would not meanwhile have aided the business in hand, while its own delightfulness would thenceforward be in a measure destroyed. It is the same with every other form of definite thought. If you violently present its expression to the senses, at times when the mind is otherwise engaged, that expression will be ineffective at the time, and will have its sharpness and clearness destroyed for ever. Much more if you present it to the mind at times when it is painfully affected or disturbed, or if you associate the expression of pleasant thought with incongruous circumstances, you will affect that expression thenceforward with a painful colour for ever.

Apply this to expressions of thought received by the eye. Remember that the eye is at your mercy more than the ear. "The eye it cannot choose but see."¹ Its nerve is not so easily numbed as that of the ear, and it is often busied in tracing and watching forms when the ear is at rest. Now if you present lovely forms to it when it cannot call the mind to help it in its work, and among objects of vulgar use and unhappy position, you will neither please the eye nor elevate the vulgar object. But you will fill and weary the eye with the beautiful form, and you will infect that form itself with the vulgarity of the thing to which you have violently attached it. It will never be of much use to you any more ; you have killed, or defiled it ; its freshness and purity are gone. You will have to pass it through the fire of much thought before

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

you will cleanse it, and warm it with much love before it will revive.

Hence then a general law, of singular importance in the present day, a law of simple common sense,—not to decorate things belonging to purposes of active and occupied life. Wherever you can rest, there decorate ; where rest is forbidden, so is beauty. You must not mix ornament with business, any more than you may mix play. Work first, and then rest. Work first, and then gaze, but do not, use golden ploughshares, nor bind ledgers in enamel. Do not thresh with sculptured flails : nor put bas-reliefs on millstones. What ! it will be asked, are we in the habit of doing so ? Even so ; always and everywhere. The most familiar position of Greek mouldings is in these days on shop fronts. There is not a tradesman's sign nor shelf nor counter in all the streets of all our cities, which has not upon it ornaments which were invented to adorn temples and beautify kings' palaces. There is not the smallest advantage in them where they are. Absolutely valueless—utterly without the power of giving pleasure, they only satiate the eye, and vulgarize their own forms. Many of these are in themselves thoroughly good copies of fine things, which things themselves we shall never, in consequence, enjoy any more. Many a pretty beading and graceful bracket there is in wood or stucco above our grocers' and cheesemongers' and hosiers' shops : how is it that the tradesmen cannot understand that custom is to be had only by selling good tea and cheese and cloth,² and that people come to them for their honesty, and their readiness, and their right wares, and not because they have Greek cornices over their windows, or their names in large gilt letters on their house fronts ? How pleasurable it would be to have the power of going through the streets of London, pulling down those brackets and friezes and large names, restoring to the tradesmen the capital they had spent in architecture, and putting them on honest and equal terms, each with his name in black letters over his door, not shouted down the street from the upper stories, and each with a plain wooden shop casement, with

THE LAMP OF BEAUTY

small panes in it that people would not think of breaking in order to be sent to prison ! How much better for them would it be—how much happier, how much wiser, to put their trust upon their own truth and industry, and not on the idiocy of their customers. It is curious, and it says little for our national probity on the one hand, or prudence on the other, to see the whole system of our street decoration based on the idea that people must be baited to a shop as moths are to a candle.

But it will be said that much of the best wooden decoration of the middle ages was in shop fronts. No ; it was in *house* fronts, of which the shop was a part, and received its natural and consistent portion of the ornament. In those days men lived, and intended to live *by* their shops, and over them, all their days. They were contented with them and happy in them : they were their palaces and castles. They gave them therefore such decoration as made themselves happy in their own habitation, and they gave it for their own sake. The upper stories were always the richest, and the shop was decorated chiefly about the door, which belonged to the house more than to it. And when our tradesmen settle to their shops in the same way, and form no plans respecting future villa architecture, let their whole houses be decorated, and their shops too, but with a national and domestic decoration. . . . However, our cities are for the most part too large to admit of contented dwelling in them throughout life ; and I do not say there is harm in our present system of separating the shop from the dwelling-house ; only where they are so separated, let us remember that the only reason for shop decoration is removed, and see that the decoration be removed also.

Another of the strange and evil tendencies of the present day is to the decoration of the railroad station. Now, if there be any place in the world in which people are deprived of that portion of temper and discretion which are necessary to the contemplation of beauty, it is there. It is the very temple of discomfort, and the only charity that the builder

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

can extend to us is to show us, plainly as may be, how soonest to escape from it. The whole system of railroad travelling is addressed to people who, being in a hurry, are therefore, for the time being, miserable. No one would travel in that manner who could help it—who had time to go leisurely over hills and between hedges, instead of through tunnels and between banks : at least those who would, have no sense of beauty so acute as that we need consult it at the station. The railroad is in all its relations a matter of earnest business, to be got through as soon as possible. It transmutes a man from a traveller into a living parcel. For the time he has parted with the nobler characteristics of his humanity for the sake of a planetary power of locomotion. Do not ask him to admire anything. You might as well ask the wind. Carry him safely, dismiss him soon : he will thank you for nothing else. All attempts to please him in any other way are mere mockery, and insults to the things by which you endeavour to do so. There never was more flagrant nor impertinent folly than the smallest portion of ornament in anything concerned with railroads or near them. Keep them out of the way, take them through the ugliest country you can find, confess them the miserable things they are, and spend nothing upon them but for safety and speed. Give large salaries to efficient servants, large prices to good manufacturers, large wages to able workmen, let the iron be tough, and the brickwork solid, and the carriages strong. The time is perhaps not distant when these first necessities may not be easily met : and to increase expense in any other direction is madness. Better bury gold in the embankments, than put it in ornaments on the stations. Will a single traveller be willing to pay an increased fare on the South Western, because the columns of the terminus are covered with patterns from Nineveh ?—he will only care less for the Ninevite ivories in the British Museum : or on the North Western, because there are old English-looking spandrils to the roof of the station at Crewe ?—he will only have less pleasure in their prototypes at Crewe House. Railroad

126

THE LAMP OF BEAUTY

architecture has, or would have, a dignity of its own if it were only left to its work. You would not put rings on the fingers of a smith at his anvil.

It is not however only in these marked situations that the abuse of which I speak takes place. There is hardly, at present, an application of ornamental work, which is not in some sort liable to blame of the same kind. We have a bad habit of trying to disguise disagreeable necessities by some form of sudden decoration, which is, in all other places, associated with such necessities. I will name only one instance, that to which I have alluded before—the roses which conceal the ventilators in the flat roofs of our chapels. Many of those roses are of very beautiful design, borrowed from fine works ; all their grace and finish are invisible when they are so placed, but their general form is afterward associated with the ugly buildings in which they constantly occur ; and all the beautiful roses of the early French and English Gothic, especially such elaborate ones as those of the triforium of Coutances, are in consequence deprived of their pleasurable influence : and this without our having accomplished the smallest good by the use we have made of the dishonoured form. Not a single person in the congregation ever receives one ray of pleasure from those roof roses ; they are regarded with mere indifference, or lost in the general impression of harsh emptiness.

Must not beauty, then, it will be asked, be sought for in the forms which we associate with our every-day life ? Yes, if you do it consistently, and in places where it can be calmly seen ; but not if you use the beautiful form only as a mask and covering of the proper conditions and uses of things, nor if you thrust it into the places set apart for toil. Put it in the drawing-room, not into the workshop ; put it upon domestic furniture, not upon tools of handicraft. All men have sense of what is right in this manner, if they would only use and apply that sense ; every man knows where and how beauty gives him pleasure, if he would only ask for it when it does so, and not allow it to be forced upon him when he does not

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

want it. Ask any one of the passengers over London Bridge at this instant whether he cares about the forms of the bronze leaves on its lamps, and he will tell you, No. Modify these forms of leaves to a less scale, and put them on his milk-jug at breakfast, and ask him whether he likes them, and he will tell you, Yes. People have no need of teaching if they could only think and speak truth, and ask for what they like and want, and for nothing else : nor can a right disposition of beauty be ever arrived at except by this common sense, and allowance for the circumstances of the time and place. It does not follow, because bronze leafage is in bad taste on the lamps of London Bridge, that it would be so on those of the Ponte della Trinità^a ; nor, because it would be a folly to decorate the house fronts of Gracechurch Street, that it would be equally so to adorn those of some quiet provincial town. The question of greatest external or internal decoration depends entirely on the conditions of probable repose. It was a wise feeling which made the streets of Venice so rich in external ornament, for there is no couch of rest like the gondola. So, again, there is no subject of street ornament so wisely chosen as the fountain, where it is a fountain of use ; for it is just there that perhaps the happiest pause takes place in the labour of the day, when the pitcher is rested on the edge of it, and the breath of the bearer is drawn deeply, and the hair swept from the forehead, and the uprightness of the form declined against the marble ledge, and the sound of the kind word or light laugh mixes with the trickle of the falling water, heard shriller and shriller as the pitcher fills. What pause is so sweet as that—so full of the depth of ancient days, so softened with the calm of pastoral solitude ?

The Seven Lamps of Architecture, ch. iv

Earth has not anything to show more fair :
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty :
The City now doth, like a garment, wear

THE LAMP OF LIFE

The beauty of the morning ; silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky ;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendour, valley, rock, or hill ;
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep !
The river glideth at his own sweet will :
Dear God ! the very houses seem asleep ;
And all that mighty heart is lying still.

WORDSWORTH, *Westminster Bridge*

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. What public buildings do you know which are severely plain in appearance ? Is this in harmony with their purpose ?
2. Describe some shop-fronts in the town where you live. What can you find out about old bridges in English towns ?
3. Ruskin scolds railways and railway stations ; but what form of decoration or adornment may be admired in them ?
4. Describe (a) your ideal house ; (b) your ideal room ; (c) the decorations you would desire in a class-room.
5. What stories have you read which give interesting descriptions of houses ?
6. Draw a design for a ' lamp on London Bridge ' which you think Ruskin might have approved.

THE LAMP OF LIFE

I HAVE elsewhere endeavoured to show, that no inconsiderable part of the essential characters of Beauty depended on the expression of vital energy in organic things, or on the subjection to such energy, of things naturally passive and powerless. I need not here repeat, of what was then advanced more than the statement which I believe will meet with general acceptance, that things in other respects alike, as in their substance, or uses, or outward forms, are noble or ignoble in proportion to the fulness of the life which either they themselves enjoy, or of whose action they bear the evidence, as sea sands are made beautiful by their bearing the seal of the motion of the waters. And this is especially

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

true of all objects which bear upon them the impress of the highest order of creative life, that is to say, of the mind of man : they become noble or ignoble in proportion to the amount of the energy of that mind which has visibly been employed upon them. But most peculiarly and imperatively does the rule hold with respect to the creations of Architecture, which being properly capable of no other life than this, and being not essentially composed of things pleasant in themselves,—as music of sweet sounds, or paintings of fair colours, but of inert substance,—depend, for their dignity and pleasureableness in the utmost degree, upon the vivid expression of the intellectual life which has been concerned in their production. . . .

I said, early in this essay, that hand-work might always be known from machine-work ; observing, however, at the same time, that it was possible for men to turn themselves into machines, and to reduce their labour to the machine level ; but so long as men work *as men*, putting their heart into what they do, and doing their best, it matters not how bad workmen they may be, there will be that in the handling which is above all price : it will be plainly seen that some places have been delighted in more than others—that there have been a pause, and a care about them ; and then there will come careless bits, and fast bits ; and here the chisel will have struck hard, and there lightly, and anon timidly ; and if the man's mind as well as his heart went with his work, all this will be in the right places, and each part will set off the other ; and the effect of the whole, as compared with the same design cut by a machine or a lifeless hand, will be like that of poetry well read and deeply felt to that of the same verses jangled by rote. There are many to whom the difference is imperceptible ; but to those who love poetry it is everything—they had rather not hear it at all, than hear it ill read ; and to those who love Architecture, the life and accent of the hand are everything. They had rather not have ornament at all, than see it ill cut—deadly cut, that is. I cannot too often repeat, it is not coarse cutting, it is not

THE LAMP OF LIFE

blunt cutting, that is necessarily bad ; but it is cold cutting—the look of equal trouble everywhere—the smooth, diffused tranquillity of heartless pains—the regularity of a plough in a level field. The chill is more likely, indeed, to show itself in finished work than in any other—men cool and tire as they complete : and if completeness is thought to be vested in polish, and to be attainable by help of sand paper, we may as well give the work to the engine-lathe at once. But *right* finish is simply the full rendering of the intended impression ; and *high* finish is the rendering of a well-intended and vivid impression ; and it is oftener got by rough than fine handling. I am not sure whether it is frequently enough observed that sculpture is not the mere cutting of the *form* of anything in stone ; it is the cutting of the *effect* of it. Very often the true form, in the marble, would not be in the least like itself. The sculptor must paint with his chisel : half his touches are not to realize, but to put power into the form : they are touches of light and shadow ; and raise a ridge, or sink a hollow, not to represent an actual ridge or hollow, but to get a line of light, or a spot of darkness. In a coarse way, this kind of execution is very marked in old French woodwork ; the irises of the eyes of its chimeric monsters being cut boldly into holes, which, variously placed, and always dark, give all kinds of strange and startling expressions, averted and askance, to the fantastic countenances. . . .

I believe the right question to ask, respecting all ornament, is simply this : Was it done with enjoyment—was the carver happy while he was about it ? It may be the hardest work possible, and the harder because so much pleasure was taken in it ; but it must have been happy too, or it will not be living. How much of the stone mason's toil this condition would exclude I hardly venture to consider, but the condition is absolute. There is a Gothic church lately built near Rouen, vile enough, indeed, in its general composition, but excessively rich in detail ; many of the details are designed with taste, and all evidently by a man who has studied old work closely.

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

But it is all as dead as leaves in December : there is not one tender touch, not one warm stroke, on the whole façade. The men who did it hated it, and were thankful when it was done. And so long as they do so they are merely loading your walls with shapes of clay : the garlands of everlastings in Père la Chaise ¹ are more cheerful ornaments. You cannot get the feeling by paying for it—money will not buy life. I am not sure even that you can get it by watching or waiting for it. It is true that here and there a workman may be found who has it in him, but he does not rest contented in the inferior work—he struggles forward into an Academician ; and from the mass of available handicraftsmen the power is gone—how recoverable I know not : this only I know, that all expense devoted to sculptural ornament, in the present condition of that power, comes literally under the head of Sacrifice for the sacrifice's sake, or worse. I believe the only manner of rich ornament that is open to us is the geometrical colour-mosaic, and that much might result from our strenuously taking up this mode of design. But, at all events, one thing we have in our power—the doing without machine ornament and cast-iron work. All the stamped metals, and artificial stones, and imitation woods and bronzes, over the invention of which we hear daily exultation—all the short, and cheap, and easy ways of doing that whose difficulty is its honour—are just so many new obstacles in our already encumbered road. They will not make one of us happier or wiser—they will extend neither the pride of judgment nor the privilege of enjoyment. They will only make us shallower in our understandings, colder in our hearts, and feebler in our wits. And most justly. For we are not sent into this world to do anything into which we cannot put our hearts. We have certain work to do for our bread, and that is to be done strenuously ; other work to do for our delight, and that is to be done heartily : neither is to be done by halves and shifts, but with a will ; and what is not worth this effort is not to be done at all. Perhaps all that we have to do is meant for nothing more than an exercise of the heart and of

THE LAMP OF MEMORY

the will, and is useless in itself ; but, at all events, the little use it has may well be spared if it is not worth putting our hands and our strength to.

The Seven Lamps of Architecture, ch. v

Because of Death hold not thy life too cheap ;
Plan for the years—found broad and strong—aim high :
Nobly to fail is more than victory
Over unworthy foes : mourn not nor weep.
One span of life thou hast 'twixt deep and deep ;
Be all thy care to fill it gloriously :
Live even as if thou knew'st thou couldst not die.
The day is short—there will be years for sleep.

H. E. CLARKE, *Death and Life*

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. What pictures or statues have you seen which seem to express (a) energy ; (b) repose ?
2. Make a list of handicrafts which may be mastered by young students to-day, and describe the especial interest of the one you like best.
3. Draw a geometrical design for colour-mosaic, and tint one detail in the colours you propose.
4. Why are hobbies of making things more lasting in the pleasure they give than hobbies of collecting things ?
5. When you next see sculpture in a museum notice carefully how (a) the eyes, (b) the balance, of the figure are shown, and describe or draw the effect.
6. Write a short essay on "The Work I should most like to do."

THE LAMP OF MEMORY

AMONG the hours of his life to which the writer looks back with peculiar gratitude, as having been marked by more than ordinary fulness of joy or clearness of teaching, is one passed, now some years ago, near time of sunset, among the broken masses of pine forest which skirt the course of the Ain, above the village of Champagnole, in the Jura. It is a spot which

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

has all the solemnity, with none of the savageness, of the Alps ; where there is a sense of a great power beginning to be manifested in the earth, and of a deep and majestic concord in the rise of the long low lines of piny hills ; the first utterance of those mighty mountain symphonies, soon to be more loudly lifted and wildly broken along the battlements of the Alps. But their strength is as yet restrained ; and the far-reaching ridges of pastoral mountain succeed each other, like the long and sighing swell which moves over quiet waters from some far off stormy sea. And there is a deep tenderness pervading that vast monotony. The destructive forces and the stern expression of the central ranges are alike withdrawn. No frost-ploughed, dust-encumbered paths of ancient glacier fret the soft Jura pastures ; no splintered heaps of ruin break the fair ranks of her forests ; no pale, defiled, or furious rivers rend their rude and changeful ways among her rocks. Patiently, eddy by eddy, the clear green streams wind along their well-known beds ; and under the dark quietness of the undisturbed pines, there spring up, year by year, such company of joyful flowers as I know not the like of among all the blessings of the earth. It was spring time, too ; and all were coming forth in clusters crowded for very love ; there was room enough for all, but they crushed their leaves into all manner of strange shapes only to be nearer each other. There was the wood anemone, star after star, closing every now and then into *nebulae* ; and there was the *oxalis*, troop by troop, like virginal processions of the *Mois de Marie*, the dark vertical clefts in the limestone choked up with them as with heavy snow, and touched with ivy on the edges—ivy as light and lovely as the vine ; and, ever and anon, a blue gush of violets, and cowslip bells in sunny places ; and in the more open ground, the vetch, and comfrey, and mezereon, and the small sapphire buds of the *Polygala Alpina*, and the wild strawberry, just a blossom or two, all showered amidst the golden softness of deep, warm, amber-coloured moss. I came out presently on the edge of the ravine : the solemn murmur of its waters rose suddenly from

THE LAMP OF MEMORY

beneath, mixed with the singing of the thrushes among the pine boughs ; and, on the opposite side of the valley, walled all along as it was by grey cliffs of limestone, there was a hawk sailing slowly off their brow, touching them nearly with his wings, and with the shadows of the pines flickering upon his plumage from above ; but with a fall of a hundred fathoms under his breast, and the curling pools of the green river gliding and glittering dizzily beneath him, their foam globes moving with him as he flew. It would be difficult to conceive a scene less dependent upon any other interest than that of its own secluded and serious beauty ; but the writer well remembers the sudden blankness and chill which were cast upon it when he endeavoured, in order more strictly to arrive at the sources of its impressiveness, to imagine it for a moment, a scene in some aboriginal forest of the New Continent. The flowers in an instant lost their light, the river its music ; the hills became oppressively desolate ; a heaviness in the boughs of the darkened forest showed how much of their former power had been dependent upon a life which was not theirs, how much of the glory of the imperishable, or continually renewed, creation is reflected from things more precious in their memories than it, in its renewing. Those ever springing flowers, and ever flowing streams had been dyed by the deep colours of human endurance, valour, and virtue ; and the crests of the sable hills that rose against the evening sky received a deeper worship because their far shadows fell eastward over the iron wall of Joux,¹ and the four-square keep of Granson.

It is as the centralisation and protectress of this sacred influence, that Architecture is to be regarded by us with the most serious thought. We may live without her, and worship without her, but we cannot remember without her. How cold is all history, how lifeless all imagery, compared to that which the living nation writes, and the uncorrupted marble bears !—how many pages of doubtful record might we not often spare, for a few stones left one upon another ! The ambition of the old Babel builders was well directed for this

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

world : there are but two strong conquerors of the forgetfulness of men, Poetry and Architecture ; and the latter in some sort includes the former, and is mightier in its reality : it is well to have, not only what men have thought and felt, but what their hands have handled, and their strength wrought, and their eyes beheld, all the days of their life. The age of Homer is surrounded with darkness, his very personality with doubt. Not so that of Pericles :² and the day is coming when we shall confess that we have learned more of Greece out of the crumbled fragments of her sculpture than even from her sweet singers or soldier historians. And if indeed there be any profit in our knowledge of the past, or any joy in the thought of being remembered hereafter, which can give strength to present exertion, or patience to present endurance, there are two duties respecting national architecture whose importance it is impossible to overrate ; the first, to render the architecture of the day, historical ; and, the second, to preserve, as the most precious of inheritances, that of past ages.

It is in the first of these two directions that Memory may truly be said to be the Sixth Lamp of Architecture ; for it is in becoming memorial or monumental that a true perfection is attained by civil and domestic buildings ; and this partly as they are, with such a view, built in a more stable manner, and partly as their decorations are consequently animated by a metaphorical or historical meaning.

As regards domestic buildings, there must always be a certain limitation to views of this kind in the power, as well as in the hearts, of men ; still I cannot but think it an evil sign of a people when their houses are built to last for one generation only. There is a sanctity in a good man's house which cannot be renewed in every tenement that rises on its ruins : and I believe that good men would generally feel this ; and that having spent their lives happily and honourably, they would be grieved, at the close of them, to think that the place of their earthly abode, which had seen, and seemed almost to sympathise in all their honour, their gladness, or

THE LAMP OF MEMORY

their suffering,—that this, with all the record it bore of them, and all of material things that they had loved and ruled over, and set the stamp of themselves upon—was to be swept away, as soon as there was room made for them in the grave ; that no respect was to be shown to it, no affection felt for it, no good to be drawn from it by their children ; that though there was a monument in the church, there was no warm monument in the hearth and house to them ; that all that they ever treasured was despised, and the places that had sheltered and comforted them were dragged down to the dust. I say that a good man would fear this ; and that, far more, a good son, a noble descendant, would fear doing it to his father's house. I say that if men lived like men indeed, their houses would be temples—temples which we should hardly dare to injure, and in which it would make us holy to be permitted to live ; and there must be a strange dissolution of natural affection, a strange unthankfulness for all that homes have given and parents taught, a strange consciousness that we have been unfaithful to our fathers' honour, or that our own lives are not such as would make our dwellings sacred to our children, when each man would fain build to himself, and build for the little revolution of his own life only. And I look upon those pitiful concretions of lime and clay which spring up, in mildewed forwardness, out of the kneaded fields about our capital—upon those thin, tottering, foundationless shells of splintered wood and imitated stone—upon those gloomy rows of formalized minuteness, alike without difference and without fellowship, as solitary as similar—not merely with the careless disgust of an offended eye, not merely with sorrow for a desecrated landscape, but with a painful foreboding that the roots of our national greatness must be deeply cankered when they are thus loosely struck in their native ground ; that those comfortless and unhonoured dwellings are the signs of a great and spreading spirit of popular discontent ; that they mark the time when every man's aim is to be in some more elevated sphere than his natural one, and every man's past life is his habitual scorn ; when men build in the hope

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

of leaving the places they have built, and live in the hope of forgetting the years that they have lived ; when the comfort, the peace, the religion of home have ceased to be felt ; and the crowded tenements of a struggling and restless population differ only from the tents of the Arab or the Gipsy by their less healthy openness to the air of heaven, and less happy choice of their spot of earth ; by their sacrifice of liberty without the gain of rest, and of stability without the luxury of change.

This is no slight, no consequenceless evil ; it is ominous, infectious, and fecund of other fault and misfortune. When men do not love their hearths, nor reverence their thresholds, it is a sign that they have dishonoured both, and that they have never acknowledged the true universality of that Christian worship which was indeed to supersede the idolatry, but not the piety, of the pagan. Our God is a household God, as well as a heavenly one ; He has an altar in every man's dwelling ; let men look to it when they rend it lightly and pour out its ashes. It is not a question of mere ocular delight, it is no question of intellectual pride, or of cultivated and critical fancy, how, and with what aspect of durability and of completeness, the domestic buildings of a nation shall be raised. It is one of those moral duties, not with more impunity to be neglected because the perception of them depends on a finely toned and balanced conscientiousness, to build our dwellings with care, and patience, and fondness, and diligent completion, and with a view to their duration at least for such a period as, in the ordinary course of national revolutions, might be supposed likely to extend to the entire alteration of the direction of local interests.³ This at the least ; but it would be better if, in every possible instance, men built their own houses on a scale commensurate rather with their condition at the commencement, than their attainments at the termination, of their worldly career ; and built them to stand as long as human work at its strongest can be hoped to stand ; recording to their children what they had been, and from what, if so it had been permitted them, they had

138

THE LAMP OF MEMORY

risen. And when houses are thus built, we may have that true domestic architecture, the beginning of all other, which does not disdain to treat with respect and thoughtfulness the small habitation as well as the large, and which invests with the dignity of contented manhood the narrowness of worldly circumstance. . . .

In public buildings the historical purpose should be still more definite. It is one of the advantages of Gothic architecture,—I use the word Gothic in the most extended sense as broadly opposed to classical,—that it admits of a richness of record altogether unlimited. Its minute and multitudinous sculptural decorations afford means of expressing, either symbolically or literally, all that need be known of national feeling or achievement. More decoration will, indeed, be usually required than can take so elevated a character ; and much, even in the most thoughtful periods, has been left to the freedom of fancy, or suffered to consist of mere repetitions of some national bearing or symbol. It is, however, generally unwise, even in mere surface ornament, to surrender the power and privilege of variety which the spirit of Gothic architecture admits ; much more in important features—capitals of columns or bosses, and string-courses, as of course in all confessed bas-reliefs. Better the rudest work that tells a story or records a fact, than the richest without meaning. There should not be a single ornament put upon great civic buildings, without some intellectual intention. Actual representation of history has in modern times been checked by a difficulty, mean indeed, but steadfast ; that of unmanageable costume : nevertheless, by a sufficiently bold imaginative treatment, and frank use of symbols, all such obstacles may be vanquished ; not perhaps in the degree necessary to produce sculpture in itself satisfactory, but at all events so as to enable it to become a grand and expressive element of architectural composition.

The Seven Lamps of Architecture, ch. vi

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

We are the music-makers,
And we are the dreamers of dreams,
Wandering by lone sea-breakers
And sitting by desolate streams ;
.

With wonderful deathless ditties
We build up the world's great cities,
And out of a fabulous story
We fashion an empire's glory :
.

We, in the ages lying
In the buried past of the earth,
Built Nineveh with our sighing,
And Babel itself with our mirth ;
And o'erthrew them with prophesying
To the old of the new world's worth ;
For each age is a dream that is dying,
Or one that is coming to birth.

ARTHUR W. E. O'SHAUGHNESSY, *Ode*

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. Give some reasons why knowing something of their history makes places and things more interesting.
2. What does Ruskin suggest makes his valley in the Jura seem full of happy meaning compared with an aboriginal forest of America ?
3. Write a theme on " Old Houses," and illustrate by describing any one you have actually known.
4. The destruction of the old Cloth Hall at Ypres in the War made every one sad. What similar buildings are in existence in England to-day ?
5. Consider any " great civic buildings " known to you, and describe the form and decoration of one of them.
6. What different forms of historical decoration have you seen ? Where are they ?

THE LAMP OF OBEDIENCE

It has been my endeavour to show in the preceding pages how every form of noble architecture is in some sort the embodiment of the Polity, Life, History, and Religious Faith

THE LAMP OF OBEDIENCE

of nations. Once or twice in doing this, I have named a principle to which I would now assign a definite place among those which direct that embodiment ; the last place, not only as that to which its own humility would incline, but rather as belonging to it in the aspect of the crowning grace of all the rest ; that principle, I mean, to which Polity owes its stability, Life its happiness, Faith its acceptance, Creation its continuance,—Obedience.

Nor is it the least among the sources of more serious satisfaction which I have found in the pursuit of a subject that at first appeared to bear but slightly on the grave interests of mankind, that the conditions of material perfection which it leads me in conclusion to consider, furnish a strange proof how false is the conception, how frantic the pursuit, of that treacherous phantom which men call Liberty : most treacherous, indeed, of all phantoms ; for the feeblest ray of reason might surely show us, that not only its attainment, but its being, was impossible. There is no such thing in the universe. There can never be. The stars have it not ; the earth has it not ; the sea has it not ; and we men have the mockery and semblance of it only for our heaviest punishment. . . . If there be any one principle more widely than another confessed by every utterance, or more sternly than another imprinted on every atom, of the visible creation, that principle is not Liberty, but Law.¹

Nor is this all ; but we may observe, that exactly in proportion to the majesty of things in the scale of being, is the completeness of their obedience to the laws that are set over them. Gravitation is less quietly, less instantly obeyed by a grain of dust than it is by the sun and moon ; and the ocean falls and flows under influences which the lake and river do not recognise. So also in estimating the dignity of any action or occupation of men, there is perhaps no better test than the question, "are its laws strait ?" For their severity will probably be commensurate with the greatness of the numbers whose labour it concentrates or whose interest it concerns.

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

This severity must be singular, therefore, in the case of that art, above all others, whose productions are the most vast and the most common ; which requires for its practice the co-operation of bodies of men, and for its perfection the perseverance of successive generations. . . . We might, therefore, without the light of experience, conclude, that Architecture never could flourish except when it was subjected to a national law as strict and as minutely authoritative as the laws which regulate religion, policy, and social relations ; nay, even more authoritative than these, because both capable of more enforcement, as over more passive matter ; and needing more enforcement, as the purest type not of one law nor of another, but of the common authority of all. But in this matter experience speaks more loudly than reason. If there be any one condition which, in watching the progress of architecture, we see distinct and general ; if, amidst the counter-evidence of success attending opposite accidents of character and circumstance, any one conclusion may be constantly and indisputably drawn, it is this ; that the architecture of a nation is great only when it is as universal and as established as its language ; and when provincial differences of style are nothing more than so many dialects. Other necessities are matters of doubt : nations have been alike successful in their architecture in times of poverty and of wealth ; in times of war and of peace ; in times of barbarism and of refinement ; under governments the most liberal or the most arbitrary ; but this one condition has been constant, this one requirement clear in all places and at all times, that the work shall be that of a *school*,² that no individual caprice shall dispense with, or materially vary, accepted types and customary decorations ; and that from the cottage to the palace, and from the chapel to the basilica, and from the garden fence to the fortress wall, every member and feature of the architecture of the nation shall be as commonly current, as frankly accepted, as its language or its coin. . . .

Neither originality, therefore, nor change, good though both may be, and this is commonly a most merciful and

THE LAMP OF OBEDIENCE

enthusiastic supposition with respect to either, is ever to be sought in itself, or can ever be healthily obtained by any struggle or rebellion against common laws. We want neither the one nor the other. The forms of architecture already known are good enough for us, and for far better than any of us ; and it will be time enough to think of changing them for better when we can use them as they are. But there are some things which we not only want, but cannot do without ; and which all the struggling and raving in the world, nay more, which all the real talent and resolution in England, will never enable us to do without : and these are Obedience, Unity, Fellowship, and Order. And all our schools of design, and committees of tastes ; all our academies and lectures, and journalisms, and essays ; all the sacrifices which we are beginning to make, all the truth which there is in our English nature, all the power of our English will, and the life of our English intellect, will in this matter be as useless as efforts and emotions in a dream, unless we are contented to submit architecture and all art, like other things, to English law. . . .

It is almost impossible for us to conceive, in our present state of doubt and ignorance, the sudden dawn of intelligence and fancy, the rapidly increasing sense of power and facility, and, in its *proper sense*, of Freedom, which such wholesome restraint would instantly cause throughout the whole circle of the arts. Freed from the agitation and embarrassment of that liberty of choice which is the cause of half the discomforts of the world ; freed from the accompanying necessity of studying all past, present, or even possible styles ; and enabled, by concentration of individual, and co-operation of multitudinous energy, to penetrate into the uttermost secrets of the adopted style, the architect would find his whole understanding enlarged, his practical knowledge certain and ready to hand, and his imagination playful and vigorous, as a child's would be within a walled garden, who would sit down and shudder if he were left free in a fenceless plain. How many and how bright would be the results in every direction of interest, not to the arts merely, but to national happiness

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

and virtue, it would be as difficult to preconceive as it would seem extravagant to state : but the first, perhaps the least, of them would be an increased sense of fellowship among ourselves, a cementing of every patriotic bond of union, a proud and happy recognition of our affection for and sympathy with each other, and our willingness in all things to submit ourselves to every law that could advance the interest of the community ; a barrier, also, the best conceivable, to the unhappy rivalry of the upper and middle classes, in houses, furniture, and establishments ; and even a check to much of what is as vain as it is painful in the oppositions of religious parties respecting matters of ritual. These, I say, would be the first consequences. Economy increased tenfold, as it would be by the simplicity of practice ; domestic comforts uninterfered with by the caprice and mistakes of architects ignorant of the capacities of the styles they use, and all the symmetry and sightliness of our harmonised streets and public buildings, are things of slighter account in the catalogue of benefits.

The Seven Lamps of Architecture, ch. vii

Stern Daughter of the Voice of God !
O Duty ! if that name thou love
Who art a light to guide, a rod
To check the erring, and reprove ;
Thou, who art victory and law
When empty terrors overawe ;
From vain temptations dost set free ;
And calm'st the weary strife of frail humanity !

Serene will be our days and bright,
And happy will our nature be,
When love is an unerring light,
And joy its own security.
And they a blissful course may hold
Even now, who, not unwisely bold,
Lives in the spirit of this creed ;
Yet seek thy firm support, according to their need.

WORDSWORTH, *Ode to Duty*

THE LAMP OF OBEDIENCE

THE FOUR MODES OF ADMIRATION

1. Sentimental admiration.
2. Proud admiration.
3. Workmanly admiration.
4. Artistic and rational admiration.

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. Quote some lines from English prose or verse in praise of (a) Law ; (b) Freedom.
2. Find some illustrations of obedience to law in some science, as physics, chemistry, botany.
3. Show that the real interest of a game depends upon strictly keeping its rules.
4. Draw or describe some (a) simple garden fences ; (b) railings for a recreation ground ; (c) church doors ; (d) house doors.
5. Say which of Ruskin's four modes of admiration you would employ in the following cases : (a) the arrival of a daring airman ; (b) a suit of thirteenth-century armour ; (c) a prize dahlia ; (d) our victorious generals ; (e) a famous dancer ; (f) a schoolfellow's prize drawing ; (g) a London and North Western locomotive engine ; (h) a rose-covered porch ; (i) Westminster Abbey ; (k) a beautiful sunset ; (l) a well-made garment.

NOTES

[The references are to the pages of the text and numbers of the notes.]

THE OPEN SKY

- 16.1. "*Too bright or good*": From Wordsworth's poem, "She was a phantom of delight," on Mary Hutchinson, whom he married.
16.2. *pure azote*: Lavoisier's name for nitrogen, from its inability to support life.
16.3. *state of solution*: Process of becoming dissolved in water.
17.4. "*The chasm of sky . . .*": *The Excursion*, Book III, ll. 94-100. Ruskin, writing in Italy away from his books, confuses this description with another striking 'sky' passage in Book II, beginning l. 50 from end of book.

MOUNTAINS

- 26.1. *Every delta—and there is one at the head of every lake in every hill-district*: Illustrations of these truths abound in the English Lake District, and in North Wales, and holiday-makers find increased enjoyment when they know something of the natural formation of the beautiful country around them.
Readers who do not travel may get much delight from books. *The Scientific Study of Scenery* is a good example.
27.2. *Every high Alp has as much snow upon it as it can hold or carry*: This evidently accounts for the varying lights seen upon it; in one region a comparatively thin coating, in another drifts of great depth. Whymper's *Scrambles among the Alps* gives many interesting details.
28.3. *universal tendencies . . . than imperative necessities*: This is a profound truth which students of science are continually meeting. The illustration which Ruskin gives of the boughs of trees helps greatly in the understanding of the principle.

WATER

- 29.1. Notice the rich material of matter and the fine eloquence of expression in the sentence beginning "If we think of it . . ."
30.2. *changefulness of feeling*: Seven different forms of water lead up to the climax—the sea, the torrent, its foam, and the reflection of its foam, the mist, the pools, the lake, the river. Then the range of epithets: wild, various, fantastic, tameless. Why this order? Do they ascend to a climax too?

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

- 30.3. *It is at your own will that you see . . . : Cf. "The Elixir" (George Herbert) :*

A man that looks on glass
On it may stay his eye;
Or, if he pleaseth, through it pass,
And then the heaven espy.

The representation of distance in a picture is always a chief difficulty. It is worth while noting successful examples; and, above all, the infallibly right representation of it in still water.

- 32.4. *the leaps are light and springy, and parabolic :* A reference to the dynamical law; the path of a projectile is a parabola. In hydrostatics we learn that when a cup of tea is stirred with a spoon the disturbed particles of fluid describe a parabola. Many interesting details about the behaviour of water may be found in an elementary science text-book.
- 33.5. *most beautiful series of inorganic forms :* Ruskin often uses the terms 'organic' and 'inorganic,' and we are familiar with the names 'organic chemistry' and 'inorganic chemistry.' Organic forms of matter are, as the term implies, bodies supplied with different parts, or organs, which have certain functions to perform: as the eyes, the limbs, the tongue. Man is a highly 'organized' form of animal life; in the lower forms the number of organs is few, and in the lowest it is difficult to distinguish any. But except on the borderland it is possible to recognize inorganic forms of matter, as rock, soil, water, and minerals.
- 34.6. *The water from its prolonged agitation . . . through a cataract :* These rushing, turbulent sentences appropriately frame the description of the storm-swept sea: "power, velocity, vastness, madness." Notice the ascending scale of this arrangement.

TREES

- 37.1. *visible ramification :* Building up by the throwing out of branches.
- 37.2. *graceful and flexible disorder :* A very happy expression, conveying the effect of the actual build of the foliage and that of its motion. The experiment with the elm-bough might be carried out with boughs of various shrubs, and help to correct much casual drawing.

BEAUTY IN NATURE

- 39.1. *that noble theoretic faculty :* Ruskin, like Wordsworth, always looks through the external beauty of natural objects to discern the inner spirit which is its cause. He explains that he uses the term 'theoretic' because such appreciation is the outcome of thought—not of the knowledge of technical processes or any mastery of science—and of "a condition of the whole moral being," the harmony that comes from love. See also Shelley's "Adonais," xlii, xliii, liv. In prose, Mrs Alfred Gatty's *Parables*

NOTES

from *Nature*, and, more advanced in style, Dr Hugh Macmillan's studies, are in the same spirit.

- 41.2. *Ophelia and Perdita* : see *Hamlet* IV, 5, and *Winter's Tale*, IV, 4.
 41.3. "It doth not love the shower . . ." : "The Small Celandine," in the group "referring to the Period of Old Age."
 45.4. *weak presence of Paul* : 2 Corinthians x, 10; *fair and ruddy countenance of David* : 1 Samuel, xvi, 12.

CRYSTAL SORROWS

- 47.1. *crystals . . . have to live a hard life of it* : These formations of pure quartz were named crystals on account of their resemblance to frozen water.
 48.2. "*brecciated agate*" : *breccia*, Italian, connected with French *brèche*, broken : a composite rock in which the stones seem to be imbedded in petrified paste.
 50.3. *a styptic power* : Astringent, binding, healing.
 52.4. *the sanguine paste* : Crimson-tinted.
 52.5. *a zoned crystallization* : Curved strata of flint deposits.
 52.6. *stalactites* : Great icicles formed from the drippings of water impregnated with calcium carbonate. The formation in excrescences on the floors of caves are known as stalagmites.
 53.7. *various power of suction* : *capillary*, from a hair-like tube; *vacuity* : the tendency of a vacuum to attract air led Galileo to pronounce his famous dictum, "Nature abhors a vacuum." The principle is largely adopted in modern mechanical appliances. Then there are magnetic, gravitational, electric, and chemical attractions, all working perpetually in the secret recesses of the earth.

THE AIR WE BREATHE : ATHENA IN THE HEAVENS

- 56.1. *miasmata* : The poisonous germs extracted from marshes and stagnant water.
 57.2. *to the mean person the myth always meant little* : And to some literal and commonplace minds to-day the myth means nothing, because they never look beneath the surface statement, and, the adventure or experience being unknown to themselves, it seems trivial. But myths are the very beginnings of literature, the earliest exercises in story-telling which grew out of wonder at the beauty and terror of Nature and admiration for the heroic deeds of men.

Some readers may care to look up Wordsworth's fine description of the life in ancient Greece out of which arose the myths. See *The Excursion*, Book IV.

- 57.3. 500 B.C. : At this period were living the prophets Haggai and Zechariah; Darius the Persian; Coriolanus, commemorated in Shakespeare's play; Cincinnatus, the Roman dictator, who left his farm to govern the state, and returned to it when the peril was past; the Greek poets Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides.

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

Translations of some of the dramas of these ancient poets are easily accessible: Browning's *Agamemnon* of Æschylus; Jebb's *Edipus at Colonus*, and Shelley's *Cyclops* of Euripides, are in all public libraries. See also E. B. Havell's *Stories from Greek Tragedy*.

- 61.4. *Her psychic relations*: Physical signifies to do with the body, the material; psychical, to do with the soul, or spiritual side of man's nature. The psychic, or spiritual, force within us can compel and inspire immense efforts and marvellous endurance in the physical frame.
- 61.5. *mechanical as well as chemical*: If it were only chemical it would enable us to preserve life, and would nourish and sustain our strength; in that it is mechanical as well it is an agent in achieving rapid or determined movements.
- 61.6. *Mortimer, in "changing hardiment with great Glendower"*: 1 *King Henry IV*, I, 3.
"That none might draw short breath to-day": 1 *King Henry IV*, V, 2.
"He's fat and scant of breath": *Hamlet*, V, 2.
"I am not yet well breathed": *As You Like It*, I, 2.
- 63.7. *Merlin prophecy*: Merlin, the enchanter and magician whose fame is preserved in the Arthurian romances. See Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, Book III, Canto III, and Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*: "Merlin and Vivien."
- 63.8. *Erechtheum*: A temple of Athena at Athens.
- 64.9. *"the zeal of thine house . . ."*: Psalm lxi, 9.
- 64.10, 11. *Apollo and Hermes*: See the interesting details in a classical dictionary, or in H. A. Guerber's *Myths of Greece and Rome*.
- 65.12. *Gorgonian serpents*: Stheno, Euryale, and Medusa were three terrible sisters whose heads were wreathed with serpents instead of hair. See the legend of Perseus and Medusa.

TRUE RICHES: ATHENA IN THE HEART

- 67.1. *the Muses with their King*: Apollo, as the god of song and music, is represented as the leader of the choir of the Muses.
- 67.2. *how to spell these most precious of all legends,—pictures and buildings*: There are many interesting and delightful books which can generally be found on the shelves of public libraries which help one to appreciate painting and architecture. *How to Look at Pictures*, by Mrs Henry Head; and *A History of Everyday Things in England*, in two volumes, by M. and C. H. Quennell, are two recent ones.
- 68.3. Ruskin's eloquent plea and argument in support of war fall painfully on the ears of a generation which has barely emerged from a world-wide war which threatened to overwhelm civilization and destroy art, letters, and industry. It is ours to hope and believe, and, as far as we can, to help to establish the result that, thanks largely to Ruskin's own teaching, peoples and governments are now conscious of other grounds for maintaining strong and

NOTES

- capable populations than the old one of their usefulness in war.
- 69.4. *pedlar's business, and ironmongery* : Ruskin's perpetual grudge against the coal and iron industries which have so defaced that part of England known as the Black Country here finds expression.
- 69.5. *if we resolve to submit to wholesome laws of labour and economy* : The very foundation of human happiness is honest work, and of human prosperity the intelligent avoiding of waste and extravagance.
- 70.6. "*I will mock when your fear cometh*" : Proverbs, i, 26, 27.
- 70.7. *darkness of the Dies Irae* : Various translations of this majestic old thirteenth-century hymn, "Day of wrath and day of mourning," are to be found in English hymn-books.
- 71.8. In the following three paragraphs Ruskin amplifies his theme of how true national riches consist in a population of worthy men and women.
- 73.9. *the money of all nations is worth at its maximum, the property of all nations, and no more* : This and the succeeding sentences emphasize the preceding pleas for labour and economy.
- 74.10. We are gradually learning better, perhaps, but when Ruskin wrote the succeeding paragraph, a great many people thought and said that extravagance in food and drink and careless use of materials were "good for trade."
- 76.11. *it is the warp of it* : In woven materials the *warp* is the threads that lie selvedge way, and the *woof* those that lie across. Good housewives judge of the excellence of the fabric by examination of the selvedge.
- 77.12. In the two following paragraphs Ruskin's dislike of machinery finds expression. Since our country has become one of the workshops of the world, machinery has certainly come to stay. But, again thanks largely to the teaching and principles of Ruskin himself, shorter hours of labour, better education of workers, and the revival of many home industries and handicrafts combine to counteract the evil effects of unintelligent machine-work.
- Among practical details, the high railway charges for freight are tending to encourage the revival of water-borne trade, and the use of England's many miles of neglected canals.

THE VEINS OF WEALTH

- 91.1. *Their political economy* : From two Greek words meaning the management of the goods of the State.
- 91.2. *Considered as a "Polis" or state* : Find out something about ideal states as described by various writers: e.g. the Utopia of Sir Thomas More.
- 92.3. *the least illegality* : Ruskin continually reminds us that an honourable mind is not content with observing 'legal' right, but acknowledges also the claims of 'moral' right.
- 94.4. *moral sign attached . . . mathematical quantity depends on the algebraical sign attached to it* : Students of elementary

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

algebra will remember that the signs + (*plus*) and - (*minus*), which in arithmetic are only signs of operation, have in algebra an extended meaning and describe the quantity as of one kind or another.

94.5. *Dura plains* : See Daniel iii, 1.

94.6. *potter's fields* : St. Matt. xxvii, 7.

LIBERTY

97.1. *the O of Giotto* : Giotto, 1276-1336, pupil of Cimabue. The Pope invited Giotto to Rome, and his envoy, desiring to see some evidence of the painter's skill, asked for something to be shown him. Giotto, taking up a sheet of paper, traced on it with a single flourish of his hand a circle so perfect that "it was a miracle to see."

97.2. Readers interested in the two following paragraphs may care to read Ruskin's *Lectures on Art*, in which are many practical counsels.

100.3. *Leonardo* : Leonardo da Vinci, 1452-1519, the "miracle of that age of miracles : a profound and original thinker, the greatest mathematician and most ingenious mechanic of his time ; architect, chemist, engineer, musician, poet, painter." *Memoirs of the early Italian Painters*, Mrs Jameson. A notable picture of his is the *Mona Lisa del Giocondo*, or *La Jaconde*, which is in the Louvre at Paris ; many reproductions are accessible elsewhere.

100.4. *withered stains of one upon a wall* : There are the remains of his painting of *The Last Supper* on the wall of the refectory of the Dominican Convent of Santa Maria delle Grazie, at Florence.

100.5. *Aglaia* : The bright or 'shining one,' one of the Graces. In these papers in the *Art Journal* Ruskin discussed the qualities and attributes in the practice of art which might be regarded as gems in the girdle of the Grace ; modesty was one, liberty another.

THE LAMP OF SACRIFICE

103.1. *batlements or machicolations* : Openings between the supports of the parapet through which missiles could be dropped upon assailants.

105.2. *such an impulse and vitality given to art as it has not felt since the thirteenth century* : This has justly been called "the most wonderful century" in European history. England shared in its glory and there are still standing many buildings, besides the ruined remains of many more, which testify to the earnestness, affection, and sacrifice which Ruskin declares must animate the spirit if true art is to be achieved. Among the ecclesiastical buildings may be named Lincoln Cathedral, Southwark Cathedral, Beverley Minster, the choir of Salisbury Cathedral, parts of Peterborough, Wells, and Ely cathedrals, Westminster Abbey, the choir of Chester Cathedral, the nave and chapter-house

NOTES

of York Minster, and the church of St Etheldreda, Ely Place, Holborn, London.

- 106.3. *the Flaxman of his time* : Flaxman, 1755-1826 : a distinguished sculptor and draughtsman.

Norman hatchet work : Norman stone-work may often be recognized by this decoration with the hatchet, the finer tool, the chisel, not having yet become an easily available instrument.

- 106.4. *if you cannot afford marble, use Caen stone . . . brick* : The great Roman Catholic cathedral at Westminster, built in the first years of this century, is of brick. It is, however, to be lined, or veneered, with slabs of marble on the inside walls.

- 106.5. *the value of the appearance of labour upon architecture* : Much might be written on the value of appearance of labour on wearing apparel ; the acceptance of machine-made garments, especially underclothing, is even now not complete. And all lace-work and embroidery is evidence of the value of the appearance of labour.

- 107.6. *carrying round of string courses* : In modern building the sudden cessation of an ornament which has been continuous, not detached, vexes the observer. " String courses " are usually layers or bands, regular or curved, forming an edging.

THE LAMP OF TRUTH

- 109.1. *a direct falsity of assertion respecting the nature of material* : We may be sure that Ruskin's strictures would have covered the many shams in modern wearing apparel and house-fittings : sham jewellery, lace, furs, velvets, leather, in dress ; and sham brass and iron, fabrics, and woodwork, in our homes.

- 110.2. *the introduction of members which should have, or profess to have, a duty, and have none* : Elsewhere Ruskin inveighs against unnecessary buttons on clothes, whether with, or without, sham button-holes. When the rebuke first appeared, toward the close of the last century, it startled many people into paying intelligent attention to their clothes.

- 111.3. *Abstractedly there appears no reason why iron should not be used as well as wood* : It seems that art and poetry take time to assimilate actual things. Future generations may have and observe canons of art in ' metallic structures ' ; and will perhaps have poetized liners and motor-cars. See Rudyard Kipling's " McAndrews Hymn " in *The Seven Seas*.

- 113.4. *the honesty of Memnon himself* : In Greek mythology Memnon was the son of Tithonus and Aurora ; he was given immortality for his prowess in his duel with Achilles. Many great temples were erected in his honour.

THE LAMP OF POWER

- 119.1. *the difference between what is derivative and original* : In all forms of literature and art there are certain conventions as to the

READINGS FROM RUSKIN

matter and the method which are observed by those who practise them. But beyond these it is possible for an artist to express in word, or tone, or structure what has already been expressed in the same way, or for his insight and capacity to utter a new or fuller truth which makes a profounder appeal to the admiration of men.

- 119.2. *coralline-like energy* : A reference to the mounds and islands in the southern seas formed by the skeletons of the strange marine polyps, a "plant-like compound animal" on the borderline of the animal and vegetable kingdoms.
- 120.3. *the acropolis of Athens* : The old upper city of Athens, said to have been built by Cecrops, first King of Attica ; the Parthenon, or Temple of Athena, dominates it. Many of the slabs of the frieze of the Parthenon may be seen in the British Museum. They are called the Elgin Marbles because Lord Elgin brought them to England.
- 121.4. "*wide as a church door*" : *Romeo and Juliet*, Act III, i :
Romeo : Courage, man ; the hurt cannot be much.
Mercutio : No, 'tis not so deep as a well, nor so wide as a church door ; but 'tis enough, 'twill serve.

THE LAMP OF BEAUTY

- 123.1. "*it cannot choose but see*" : Perhaps Ruskin has in mind the line of the Wedding Guest in Coleridge's *The Ancient Mariner*. He seems, however, to do less than justice to our unseeing eyes : very few of us 'see' things which surround us unless something occurs to impress our attention.
- 124.2. *custom is to be had only by selling good tea and cheese and cloth* : Ruskin's conviction is not borne out by the effects of modern trading methods. Display and advertisement and reiterated assertions seem to attract custom more than unobtrusive good quality.
- 128.3. *Ponte della Trinità* : A famous bridge over the Arno in Florence is the Ponte santa Trinità, built about fifty years before Dante was born.

THE LAMP OF LIFE

- 132.1. *Père la Chaise* : One of the great cemeteries of Paris, called after the Jesuit ecclesiastic of the seventeenth century, whose house and garden occupied the site.

THE LAMP OF MEMORY

- 135.1. *the iron wall of Joux* : A fortress on the pass over the mountains between France and Switzerland.
the four-square keep of Granson : A strong fort over the Swiss border, where Charles the Bold of Burgundy, husband of Princess Margaret of England, was defeated in the fifteenth century.

NOTES

- 136.2. *Pericles* : The famous Athenian statesman who lived about 450 B.C.
- 138.3. *ordinary course of national revolutions . . . local interests* : Here Ruskin seems to be thinking of the peaceful and gradual revolutions which accompany economic changes, such as the changing of the locality of an industry, or the disappearance of some form of manufacture.

THE LAMP OF OBEDIENCE

- 141.1. *that principle is not Liberty, but Law* : Cf. the majestic words of Hooker, *Ecclesiastical Polity*, Book I. "Of Law there can be no less said than that her seat is the bosom of God, her voice the harmony of the world ; all things in heaven and earth do her honour, the very least as feeling her care and the greatest as not exempt from her power."
- 142.2. *the work shall be that of a school* : In its narrow sense a school of artists may mean the disciples or followers of some great master. But the wider meaning is that of national or local character, as when we speak of paintings of the Umbrian School, Flemish School, Dutch School, British School.

RUSKIN'S PRINCIPAL WORKS

Modern Painters
The Seven Lamps of Architecture
The Stones of Venice
Queen of the Air
Unto This Last
The Political Economy of Art
The Crown of Wild Olive
Lectures on Art
The Elements of Drawing
Fors Clavigera
Præterita
Ethics of the Dust
The Cestus of Aglaia

820.9/RUS



11917

